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December 1993

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DEMOLITION MAN

Sylvester Stallone
as San Angeles
future cop John
Spartan, in 2032.

NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS

Behind the Scenes of Producer Tim
Burton's Stop-Motion Masterpiece

ADDAMS FAMILY VALUES

The TV Show's Creator Charges
Paramount with Artistic Theft

Volume 24 Number 5



Vaught



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The magazine with a "Sense of Wonder."

DECEMBER, 1993

It may be Fall, but it looks like Summer at the movies with the October 8th debut of Warner Bros' DEMOLITION MAN at theatre screens nationwide. It's a rare foray into science fiction from Sylvester Stallone and action movie king Joel Silver, the producer of crowd pleasers like DIE HARD and LETHAL WEAPON.

Our production article by Hollywood correspondent Sheldon Teitelbaum takes a look at how Silver and Stallone have wedded their action movie formula to the genre, injecting the science fiction elements as more than just a backdrop. Teitelbaum roamed the set during filming and talked to first-time director and Ridley Scott protégé Marco Brambilla about working in the BLADE RUNNER arena of his mentor that set the tone for filmed science fiction for years to come. For DEMOLITION MAN, Brambilla strove for a different aesthetic—and hopefully bigger boxoffice.

As if to remind us that Summer is indeed gone, just around the corner is Tim Burton's NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS, ushering in our favorite holiday—Halloween. Burton's puppet film treasure opens nationally October 22nd after exposure on the festival circuit. San Francisco writer Lawrence French provides a production article on the Bay area filming of Burton's dream project, a revival and refinement of the puppet film techniques of legendary Puppetoon producer George Pal.

And though Summer's gone, still roaring at the boxoffice is Steven Spielberg's JURASSIC PARK. Effects expert Ron Magid takes a look behind-the-scenes at the communications revolution wrought by Spielberg and the computer aces at ILM. Magid talked to ILM effects supervisor Dennis Muren and his team of CGI animators and programmers about the capabilities and implications of the new technology. Though ILM's dinosaur work is truly astounding, it's nice to know that there's still a place for the hands-on artistry of Burton's NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS.

Frederick S. Clarke



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PHOTO CREDITS: ©1992 DC Comics (8,9); HBO (Cliff Lipson 6,7); ©1993 ILM/Universal (54, 55T, 56T, 57T); ©1988 New Line Cinema (50BR; Rory Flynn 50BL); ©1993 Orion (4,5; Alan Markfield 4,5T); ©1991 Paramount (15; Annie Leibovitz 15T); ©Touchstone (32-47; Elizabeth Annas 32L, 34T, 37TL 37B, 39T, 41B, 42B, 44, 47T, 47L, Phil Bray 37TR, 42BI, 43B; Joel Fletcher 41T; Eric Swenson 33B, 40L, 41BR, 43T, 45, 47B); ©1993 Turner Pics (59T); ©1992 Universal/Ambin (52-58; Murray Close 52, 53); ©1993 Warner Bros (16-31; Rob Bantzdorff 19I; Andrew Cooper 17B, 18, 19T, 20, 21, 22 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31; Aaron Rapaport 17T); **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:** David Levy, Phil Tippett, Henry Selick, Bruce Timm. **COVER ART:** David Voigt.

CINEFANTASTIQUE MAGAZINE (ISSN 0145-6032) is published bimonthly in February, April, June, August, October and December at 7240 W. Roosevelt Rd., Forest Park, IL 60130. (708)366-5566. Second class postage paid at Forest Park, IL 60130 & additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to CINEFANTASTIQUE, P.O. Box 270, Oak Park, IL 60303. **Subscriptions:** Six Issues \$27, Twelve Issues \$48, Eighteen Issues \$69. (Foreign & Canada: Six Issues \$32, Twelve Issues \$55, Eighteen Issues \$80.) Single copies: \$8. **Retail Distribution:** In the U.S. by Eastern News Distributors, 250 W. 55th St., New York, NY 10019. (800)221-3148. In Great Britain by Titan Distributors, P.O. Box 250, London E3 4RT. Phone: (01)980-6167. **Submissions** of artwork and articles are encouraged, but must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Contents copyright © 1993 by Frederick S. Clarke. CINEFANTASTIQUE® is a Registered U.S. Trademark. **PRINTED IN USA.**

RoboCop

After two years on the shelf, Orion's cyborg

By Dan Persons

You can't keep a good (iron) man down. RoboCop, last sighted three years ago tightening his neck bolts on the streets of Old Detroit, has turned out to be a hardier hunk of stainless steel than anyone, including a corps of bottom-line-conscious accountants, could have imagined. ROBOCOP 3, the sequel even bankruptcy couldn't kill, is finally receiving its American release, having already played to packed houses overseas for the past half-year. Come November 5th, courtesy of Orion Pictures, American fans will find out whether there's still life in the ol' cyborg.

The delay had nothing to do with lack of material. The third installment of the series had in fact wrapped production in the spring of '91, after a fast-track schedule that attempted to race a release date rumored to be as early as Christmas (but that cooler heads estimated would be closer to the spring of '92). What stood in the way of those plans were the desperate financial straits of Orion Pictures, the film's production company. "Orion Pictures filed Chapter 11 toward the end of our post-production schedule," said ROBO 3 director Fred Dekker, when we caught up with him this past July. "The company shut down in order to reorganize. All of the pictures that had been completed were put on hold in terms of release, because the banks felt that the studio was not solvent and didn't have the money to sell the pictures."

Dekker—who also co-scripted the film along with comics writer and ROBO 2 author Frank Miller—inherited a franchise that, after its disastrous second installment, seemed to promise only further dissipation of the original's dark, violent worldview. And indeed, the Miller/Dekker script—in which cyborg Officer Alex Murphy has his loyalties tested during full-fledged class-warfare—so teems with armed revolutionaries, fascistic security forces, and greed-drenched industrialists that little time seems

"The ratings board said we had too much shooting," said Dekker. "We took out four shooting shots and left in 112. I think it'll make a difference, don't you?"



Director Fred Dekker and Robert Burke as RoboCop, on the Atlanta set in 1991. Orion Pictures is set to open their tentpole franchise nationwide November 5.

left for the conflicted robot whose story this is supposed to be. Dekker, who at the post-production stage was well aware of the problem, felt he's surmounted it successfully. "The picture has a well-constructed plot," he said. "There are a lot of characters that intertwine and intermingle and a lot of plot lines that are moving concurrently and then bisect one another. I think it's not unlike THE FIRM, where Tom Cruise is clearly the main character, but there are all of these other characters whose lives he bisects with. If you see the movie, you see a lot of cutting away to the Gary Buseys and the Holly Hunters and the Ed Harris and the Wilford Brimleys, and our picture is very similar to that. It's not as simple a movie as ROBOCOP, which goes from point A to point B and kicks *some butt*. He's embroiled in a complex web of characters who are all playing off each other as they're playing off him."

While Dekker faced a daunting challenge at the editing table, the task was

equally matched by his interactions with the MPAA ratings board, whose history with the ROBOCOP series has never approached a working definition of synergistic. Said Dekker, "We had to go to them four or five times before we got our PG-13. They just felt it was very intense. One of the problems with the ratings board is that they are rarely specific, because they feel like they are encroaching on your creativity if they do that. You end up with a lot of vagaries like 'Too many guns,' and 'Too many explosions,' and things like that. It's really tough to address.

"There's very little blood in the film. Most of our squib blood-packs were sixty percent dust, so you get the sense of an impact but there isn't that sort of Peckinpah/John Woo blood spurting all over the place. Despite that, the ratings board said we had too much shooting, and ended up cutting out shots of people with guns firing—you don't see where the bullets go, you don't see who they're

shooting at, just cuts of people firing guns. That was a war scene, by the way, that those shots were in. We ended up taking out four shots of people shooting and left 112."

Aside from the MPAA-dictated changes, the rest of the film remains essentially what Dekker handed over to Orion last year. The only other major change was accomplished with the director's full cooperation—a change that not only improved the climactic debut of a new piece of RoboHardware, but that guaranteed that fans of stop-motion animator Phil Tippett would not go away disappointed. "We previewed the director's cut," said Dekker, "and the preview cards were interesting. We asked an audience what their favorite and least-favorite scene was. [Most often], the favorite scene was the finale, the flying sequence. But the least favorite scene, we found, was also the flying sequence. So we realized that we had a diamond in the rough, but it wasn't quite working.

"At this point, Phil and I had worked to-

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gets his shot.

gether a little bit—prior to his really committing to JURASSIC PARK—so he looked at what we had and I said, ‘What can we do here?’ I called ILM around this time, just to get some input, and told them what our problems were. And the problem was basically that whenever you have a guy—particularly somebody in something as weighty and cumbersome as a RoboCop suit, plus the flight pack which is another, God-knows how many hundred pounds—it’s difficult to create blue-screen images where he has a lot of motion. Had we gone for motion-control we could have pulled it off a lot better. Ultimately, we found that in order to give him the aerodynamics and the style we wanted—really kick-ass—we had to do shots with the stop-motion puppets. We ended up redoing shots we had with [Robo actor] Robert Burke with the stop-motion puppet. ILM told me that that was the exact process they had gone through with THE ROCKETEER: they had shot Bill Campbell in full gear in live-action blue-screen and found that, once it had been matted, no matter how crisp the matte was, there’s just something wrong about it. It might be the matching of the lighting. It might be the movement.

“We decided to go back and redo a lot of those shots. Phil did them as stop-motion shots where we could implement interactive lighting to match the background plates, and we gave [Robo] a lot more motion. It turned out to be a crackerjack sequence... Phil’s collaboration proved to be enormously gratifying. He really saved the movie.”

ROBO 3’s November debut comes at the end of a long, rumor-laden delay for the



Robo, outfitted with new flamethrower weaponry in the sequel, held up by Orion’s brush with bankruptcy.

film, a delay that included hints of a direct-to-video release (“I almost clocked the guy who said it,” noted Dekker of the rumor), and the circulation of several spurious theatrical release dates. “There were only two, solid release dates,” said Dekker. “The first was July 16th, which was decided on back in the spring; Orion made a firm commitment to that. What happened—which was initially very frustrating for me—was that they decided not to open it then. In retrospect, it was the brightest move they could have made, because this has been the biggest summer in the history of motion pictures. The competition is fierce. It was a very wise move—[ROBO 3] would have come on the heels of JURASSIC PARK, CLIFFHANGER and SLEEPLESS IN SEATTLE and the re-release of SNOW WHITE and THE FIRM, and very likely would have been clobbered, in the way that a movie like DENNIS THE MENACE was clobbered.”

All in all, Dekker claimed he was happy with the film as it stands, even though—as an avowed fan of hyper-speed, Hong Kong action directors John Woo and Jackie Chan—he admits to the temptation to push

things *much* farther: “If I erred in any direction, it was making it PG-13. I would’ve loved to see him kick a little more ass. He kicks ass, but he does it in a very self-righteous sort of way: the bad guys die and even some of the good guys die, but it doesn’t have that kind of nihilistic, anarchic quality that the first picture had or that Frank Miller’s vision of it had. It doesn’t lack from that, but I would have liked to see more.”

These days, Dekker is at work with LAST ACTION HERO writer David Arnot on a project for Paramount Pictures. (“There are no genre trappings in it,” he’s quick to note, “but it has a larger-than-life flavor.”) And what about directing ROBOCOP 4? “Not in a million years. Once was great, but, how much more can you do? They’re now planning a TV series to be made in Canada, which will debut after the first of the year. I think they’re shooting themselves in the foot, because TV, unlike features, has got such a short production schedule—particularly for an hour action show. You’re looking at four and one-half to five days on the kind of budgets they have for syndicated television—and the guy takes 15 to 20 minutes to get into his costume—so how many shots a day are you going to get? Either you make a costume that looks less good—you can’t afford Rob Bottin on a TV budget—or you’re going to have a show that goes hugely over budget.”

Right now, though, Dekker has few complaints about his time with the Future of Law Enforcement. “Apart from Orion’s financial problems, it was the best professional, working situation I’ve had in my life. I think it’s my best work, I think the crew was spectacular, I think the score by Basil Polidaris is superb. It was a joy, the highlight of my life. I would hope to have this much freedom and fun on any other film I make. And I’m not likely to.” □



Remy Ryan, Robo’s new sidekick, with ED-209. Animator Phil Tippet (below) animated shots of Robo’s robot rival, as well as scenes of a jet-flying Robocop.



ATTACK OF THE 50 FT. WOMAN

Daryl Hannah is big in a TV remake of a legendary '50s science fiction B-movie.

By Dan Scapperotti

Arguably one of the most impressive movie posters ever created was for the Allied Artists release of *ATTACK OF THE FIFTY FT. WOMAN* in 1958, its image of a scantily clad woman towering over a highway overpass. The statuesque Allison Hayes played Nancy Archer whose encounter with an alien from outer space caused her to grow to gigantic proportions. Thirty years later the ill fated Nancy Archer is back in HBO's remake of a minor epic. Replacing the late Allison Hayes is everyone's favorite mermaid, Daryl Hannah. Newcomer Christy Conaway steps into the Yvette Vickers role as Honey, the barroom hussy who's set to run off with Harry, Nancy's faithless husband. HBO planned to air the TV movie in November.

The \$7 million project is the brainchild of 41-year-old New York screenwriter Joseph Dougherty, who relocated to Los Angeles to write for *THIRTY SOMETHING*. A science fiction and horror fan, Hollywood contacts led to the filming of Dougherty's spec scripts for *STEEL AND LACE* (22:1:54), the story of a rape victim turned vengeful android, and *LOVECRAFT*, retitled by HBO as *CAST A DEADLY SPELL* (22:3:56). On the basis



Hannah stars as Nancy Archer, whose chance encounter with a UFO makes her grow to giant size. HBO cablecasts the \$7 million remake in November.

of the latter's success, HBO polled the writer for additional material. He proposed a remake of *ATTACK OF THE 50 FT. WOMAN*, another script he had previously written on spec. Two years later the film went before the cameras.

"The original film is only 65 minutes long and those four reels seem like they're stutter-printed to make the film longer," noted Dougherty, who is also executive producer on the new film. "Years ago Lorimar had bought the Allied Artists rights and they put the film out on video. It was a really good transfer with all this day for night, poverty row, Ansel Adams look to it. I decided to

go in and play with the story a little bit. To me it made sense to remake the movie, but I found a lot of resistance from people who didn't know what I wanted to do. I was glad I could show Lorimar *CAST A DEADLY SPELL*. I told them I didn't want to make *POLICE ACADEMY*, I wanted to treat the film with a lot of respect. Perhaps more respect than it got in 1958.

"This is the stuff I love, these crude black and white movies from the '50s. To me they're like passion plays, like icons that are being acted out on the screen."

At first Lorimar couldn't believe that Dougherty was seriously considering remaking the

film. "I think the conceit here is that I didn't want to make a micro budget film. The production quality of the film is much more in keeping with Jack Arnold and Universal of a slightly earlier period, with a side order of George Pal."

The writer tampered little with his source material. "I added two characters and I changed the ending a little bit. Actually the original Mark Hanna screenplay is pretty serviceable for the film. Nancy Archer has a father now, and her therapist is a character. There are two doctors in the original. I just made one of them her therapist."

How did the author view the remake in terms of the progressive '90s? "I saw the film focusing on the dangers of nuclear energy and female empowerment," he said. "It's about a woman who's abused and this is a way she kind of gets even. I've taken a low budget science fiction picture from the '50s and turned it into a myth about empowerment."

Perhaps the easiest task for the filmmakers was to rise above the pathetic special effects of the original. Gene Warren, Jr.'s organization, Fantasy II, was hired to handle the visuals. "I wanted to give it some of the dignity I think it deserved," said Dougherty. "Clearly we can do more than play around



Hannah, grown huge, rips the roof off of Tony's Bar & Grill, looking for her abusive ex-husband, a '50s icon in the service of '90s female empowerment.

with that one rubber hand and those awful transparent plates. They're bad but to me there is a strange visceral power. This is a movie that is better known for its poster than for itself. People know that image more than they know the movie. It's one of the most powerful that came out of the '50s. And it's also totally wrong. It never happens in the movie. We're going to get a lot closer to the poster, as far as the script is concerned. We don't have the overpass, but she's going to be a lot more imposing when she comes into town."

Dougherty had a very clear picture of how the film should look. Director Chris Guest and Dougherty agreed on an image that is halfway between the film's famous poster and some of the footage of the spider in Universal's *TARANTULA* in terms of using the desert road when Daryl Hannah comes

marching into town looking for her estranged husband.

"I don't like scripts that direct on the page," said Dougherty, "but I felt a need to be very specific about what was going on, such as can we do the poster shot and having her tearing the roof off of Tony's Bar and Grill. I had asked for certain compositions because these are, and I'm going to be very blasphemous, like the Stations of the Cross. These are icons of the original film. For an 11 or 12 year-old boy this becomes very sexual by the end of the original movie."

When production began at 7 a.m. last April 26th, the cameras were rolling on a vast desert set. "One of the things that I put in the script—and HBO wasn't sure what I meant—was that this takes place in the desert, but it's not *the* desert," said Dougherty. "You

are on a sound stage. I wanted the desert from *IT CAME FROM OUTER SPACE*. It took a while for them to understand what I wanted. They finally built this huge slab of Jack Arnold desert. They couldn't find a sound stage big enough so they built it in—I think a glass factory—somewhere up in Santa Clarita. It's a huge cyclorama with Joshua trees and a road with forced perspective."

Another bow to simpler times was Dougherty's vision of how car shots should look. Chris Guest shot four days of rear projection plates because the writer didn't want anyone driving a car with car mounts for this movie. "I wanted everything in front of a process screen," said Dougherty. "People will either get it or not get it."

"When I first met Chris I wanted to figure out if this was going to work or not. Although he said he understood the script, I didn't know, so I asked him a trick question just to see what would happen. I asked him if he had thought about the music. He turned around and asked me if I'd ever heard of an instrument called a theremin. I knew I was going to be okay. A theremin is an electrically charged stainless steel pole which is basically the main instrument on *DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL*."

The look of the film is designed not to remind the audience so much of the original film as of Jack Arnold and George Pal. Since the use of black and white photography Dougherty would have preferred was not an option, he and



Filming Hannah and miniatures by Fantasy II Effects, realizing the action the original film only hinted at.

Guest went for a really saturated color prevalent in the Universal technicolor films of the early '50s.

"Until the film was announced I was met with blank stares," said Dougherty. "Why would you want to do this? And as soon as it was announced everyone said this is a terrific idea, it's fabulous. I said I've been trying to tell you this for four years."

Up next for Dougherty is a remake of Rene Clair's 1944 fantasy, *IT HAPPENED TOMORROW* which starred Dick Powell as a man who finds a newspaper from two days into the future which predicts his death. □

Giving Nancy a sedative, nurse Hilary Shepard and Paul Benedict as Dr. Lobe.



BATMAN



The Animated Movie

Creators of the cartoon hit bring their Caped Crusader to theatres in December.

By Robert Garcia

Batman returns to the silver screen this Christmas without Michael Keaton or Tim Burton. December's Batman movie is courtesy of the folks at Warner Bros Animation, and is an off-shoot of their Emmy Award-winning television series on Fox. The show's producers guarantee that it will be unlike any animated film American audiences have ever seen.

"This is a feature-length animated drama with no music or dancing or funny animals or little mice running around," said coproducer

Battling Two-Face in the series. The movie will be more adult, with graphics praised by comic fans.



Warner Bros continues production of the series while readying the first cartoon feature, as well as developing the third installment of their live-action movie.

Alan Burnett. "It's a completely different animated experience for the movie-going public."

Burnett and fellow producers, Bruce Timm and Eric Radomski, have proven that point with their innovative series. They've incorporated film techniques such as soft focus, focus pulls, switching from color to black and white for simulated TV news broadcasts, and much more to add to the feeling that the show is really a drama, not just a cartoon show. While these tricks are commonly used overseas, they have not been done in the United States for animated television. "We spent more money on the animation," said Timm. "The same studios that did work for our shows, Spectrum and Dong Yang, are working on the movie. When we first handed the show over to them it was intended to be a video feature and even then, we

told them, 'You guys did a great job on the show, but it has to be even better.'"

Burnett, in charge of the series' Emmy-winning scripts, was determined that the movie's story would be one of quality and dramatic sophistication. "I wasn't interested in hardware or doing a lineup of the Rogues' Gallery, with each villain having his or her big scene," said Burnett. "I was interested in doing a big story about Bruce Wayne. We hadn't really done a strong love story with Bruce in all of the 65 episodes we'd done, and that's what I wanted to tackle. "You have to shift your brain into a movie mode and tell a story on a grand scale. That's what we've succeeded in doing, a gothic-romance thriller with the woman who got away: the one woman who might have changed Bruce's life forever by

marrying him and stopping him from becoming Batman. Which, by the way, would not have necessarily been a bad thing for Bruce."

Burnett's story tells of Phantasm, a deadly vigilante who has come to Gotham and is killing criminals using methods very similar to Batman's. His spree throws suspicion on Batman and the police then try to bring the Caped Crusader in. While this is going on, Andrea Beaumont, Bruce Wayne's one true love, returns to Gotham, and in a series of flashbacks throughout the movie, we see Wayne's early life: his first attempts at

vigilantism without the Batman costume, his love affair with Andrea, and how he came to dress up and battle crime as Batman. His hunt for Phantasm leads to a climactic three-way confrontation that involves the Joker and Andrea's life hangs in the balance. "I think people are going to be surprised how adult it is," said Burnett. "It's a love story. It's a story about betrayals, vendettas, unrequited romance. It has a lot of adult themes running through it."

After Burnett wrote the story he split the screenwriting chores amongst himself and the series story editors Paul Dini, Martin Pasko and Michael Reaves. The producers proceeded to do what no live-action producer would. They relegated different segments to the series' four regular directors: Boyd Kirkland, Kevin Altieri, Dan Riba and Frank Paur. Each director was



“This is a feature-length drama with no music, funny animals or little mice running around. It’s a completely different experience for the movie-going public.”

series, president Jean MacCurdy ordered up a made-for-video movie from the BATMAN crew, even though only one of the show’s producers—Burnett—actually had done feature film work before. Burnett wrote Disney’s *DUCK TALES: THE TREASURE OF THE LOST LAMP*, under similar conditions, the first time Disney’s television department had been asked to come up with a feature.

Burnett explained how Warner Bros Studio decided to turn the animated BATMAN into a theatrical release: “One of the studio execs came over and looked at the computer stuff we were doing and said, ‘We should make a movie out of this.’ Then scripts of the video film started to be sent over to the main lot, and they were all well received. I went over and pitched the story and everyone said, ‘Yeah, let’s do this as a movie.’” The final decision was made last February.

The actors for the voices this time out are Dana Delaney for Andrea Beaumont, Stacy Keach as Carl Beaumont, Hart Bochner as Councilman Reeves, Abe Vigoda as mobster Salvatore Vallestria. Of course, Kevin Conroy as Batman, Mark Hamill as the Joker and Bob Hastings as Commissioner Gordon.

Last May, everyone had their first look at the movie. “We saw a Leica reel [the storyboard shot to the timing lengths],” said Timm. “We had a screening over at the lot with the directors and I was really stunned by it. I wasn’t expecting much. It’s just filmed storyboards. But it was fascinating. I really got hooked into the story. The action scenes are really going to knock you out. It feels more adult, more theatrical.”

The production company is currently working on 20 new episodes for BATMAN’s next season on Fox, while they wait for the film’s final animation to come back for the final edit and the addition of the soundtrack. “I can’t wait to do the sound mix,” said Timm. “We get to do it in a big theater with Sensurround. We’ll have twice the size of the orchestra we have for television. It’ll be great.” □

The animated Batman faces off against The Joker, voiced by STAR WARS’ Mark Hamill, and Harley Quinn, now airing as a hit series on the Fox TV network.

assigned a sequence by location, except for Kirkland, who did all the flashbacks. The directors worked with their own team of storyboard artists to plan out each sequence.

“We banged it together pretty quick, in four or five months,” said Timm. “We finished the first season, and Warner didn’t want to let anyone go, because it’s really hard to get them back once they go to other studios. So we kept everyone on staff.” After four months of intense preproduction, producers Timm and Eric Radomski were in Korea dropping off the storyboards for their direct-to-video BATMAN animated feature. On their last day there, they got word the movie *might* be released theatrically.

“We had to make sure it worked in both formats,” said Timm. “When it’s done for a square, it doesn’t necessarily

work when it’s shot rectangularly.” (The movie was shot in a standard 1.8:5 aspect ratio, not wide screen.)

But why a feature film, direct-to-video or theatrical? In 1992, Warner Bros Animation released the made-for-video movie, *TINY TOONS: HOW I SPENT MY SUMMER VACATION*, which proved extremely successful. Hoping to hit again with the department’s second



Harley Quinn, as drawn by Bruce Timm, co-producer of the series and movie with Alan Burnett and Eric Radomski. Warner Bros opens the movie nationwide December 24th.



The cast of the original TV series of 1963-4. Series creator David Levy charges that the Paramount movie series uses his characters and concepts without credit. L to R: John Astin as Gomez, Lisa Loring, Ted Cassidy, Carolyn Jones and Ken Weatherwax.

Addams Family Values

Producer David Levy accuses Paramount's look-alike franchise of artistic theft.

By Robert T. Garcia

David Levy has known both the value of and the values of the Addams Family for the last 31 years. Levy has been creating and selling shows based upon the characters since 1963 when he sold the idea for a TV series to ABC and Filmways. Later, he sold a made-for-television movie to NBC and Charles Fries, a cartoon series idea to Hanna-Barbera, and a never-aired series revival to producer Patrick Dromgoole in England, which had Gomez inherit an English castle. Levy made all his deals with the full support of Charles Addams.

When Orion Pictures, Filmway's successor decided to make a feature film out of the property, Levy contacted the studio and offered help. "While Orion exec Marc Platt thought I could, apparently [producer Scott] Rudin and [director Barry] Sonnenfeld felt otherwise, and they dropped it," said Levy. When Paramount bought the film from Orion, Levy wrote studio chief Brandon Tartikoff, and got no response. "I was annoyed," said Levy. "I had not asked for any money from any-



Levy, creator of the '60s ABC TV series, on the set with cartoonist Charles Addams. Paramount's movie copied the show and didn't even give Levy credit.

body. I simply said that I thought I could make some constructive suggestions. Perhaps I could save them from some problems."

Tartikoff, formerly head of NBC, had known Levy for years, and his silence enraged Levy's friend, the late TV producer Mark Goodson, who contacted his attorney Neil Papiano, who convinced Levy that he had a good case to regain his rights, provided no one still had a signed copy of Levy's series contract. Without that contract, Paramount wouldn't be able to prove they owned Levy's characterizations of Addams' famous cartoon figures.

The litigation dragged on for over a year, until Paramount found the contact. "Paramount owns everything that I created, which is unfortunate," said Levy, who isn't credited on the movies. "Whatever is any good in the movie, I created. They created *absolutely nothing*. What made the picture an overwhelming success—it didn't have good word of mouth—was that people love the old ADDAMS FAMILY television show."

Paramount, in marketing



Addams on the set with Astin, Weatherwax and Loring. Levy was given artistic freedom by the late *New Yorker* cartoonist in developing the series' format.

their movie and its upcoming sequel *ADDAMS FAMILY VALUES*, to open November 27, tried to distance itself from the original TV show. Hypocritically, as Levy pointed out, "They didn't think ill enough of it to change all the names of the characters and all their attitudes from the TV show. They tried to distance themselves because they were afraid of a lawsuit, but they also thought they were

creating something. They created *nothing!*

"They had all the cartoons to work from and they used very little that came out of Addams' work. I know all the cartoons very well and they did a second-rate job of adaptation. They said they went back to those cartoons for their inspiration. That would have been fine if they had. They didn't capture what was good in the cartoons

Levy devised the concept of "Thing," looking for the mail in the series' demo reel. Inset: Filming the demo at a house replaced with matte work.



“Anything good in the movie, I created. They created absolutely nothing. People’s love for the old show made it a success.”

—TV Producer David Levy—

or what was good in the series.

"Without the TV show there wouldn't have been a movie. Nobody would have done anything about his cartoons, because nobody ever saw them, relatively speaking. You're talking about a couple of hundred thousand people in *The New Yorker* compared to millions on television."

How Charles Addams cartoons got from the pages of *The New Yorker* to television is David Levy's story. In 1962, he saw a copy of an Addams book in the window of a bookstore on Fifth Avenue. He walked a ways down the block, then stopped his two companions, Vic Mizzy, who wrote the show's theme song, and Don Saltzman and said, "Fellas, we just passed a *great* show."

Levy called up Addams, and by their second meeting, they started work on the series. "Addams never conceived of them as a family," said Levy. "He never called them that. They were all just foils for his humor.

They were all line drawings in which the people had no particular characteristics and no names, simply his outrageous comment on society. He didn't want to personalize them.

"The moment I saw that group," said Levy, "I saw them as *FATHER KNOWS BEST*, a show I put on the air years earlier, and I knew in a situation comedy they would become America's most beloved family. I never saw them as Charles Addams' macabre figures. I knew that's what they were, but I knew I would make them bizarre, instead. I would make them tender and loving, with a husband and wife who would really have a romantic liaison, and children who love them. None of the bickering that was common to situation comedies."

They started with basics, Addams came up with the names for Morticia, Wednesday and Pugsley. Levy came up with Lurch, Fester and Gomez. "Addams wanted to call the father, Rapelli," said Levy. "I argued that since we had a Fester we couldn't have a Rapelli. That's two ugly words. I argued for Manuel, Gomez or even Don Juan, but he didn't like any of these." The debate continued for weeks.

Levy asked Addams to come up with short descriptions of his characters for development. During their discussions, Levy asked Addams about a cartoon in which a big sign was on the mansion's gates with the words: "BEWARE OF THE THING." He asked Addams what The Thing was and Addams pointed to a face occasionally seen in the family's cartoons, usually behind the second story's banister or peaking out of a crawl-space or shutters. Levy thought a disembodied head with two hands would be in his terms, "too gross," and turned to a car-

toon with human arms taking the place of the stereo's mechanical arms to create Thing.

"We thought of bringing Thing out of his box," said Levy. "We rejected it because it was too macabre. We wanted the audience to wonder where is that hand coming from, and what's attached to it? Everybody had his own answer to that. It may have fit into the feature film, because the movie certainly stayed much more to the macabre side of Addams. But we rejected that."

While Levy had been working with Addams, he had also been corresponding with Filmways president, Al Simon, about another series that didn't work out. However, Martin Ransohoff, Filmways chairman of the board, picked up on a postscript in one of Levy's letters: "P.S. I'm also working on a series based on the cartoons of Charles Addams." Ransohoff and Simon had Levy come out to California and put him up at the Beverly Hills Hotel to work on development of the show.

Levy wanted to use the comedy team of Ed James and Seaman Jacobs to write the script, but Simon and Ransohoff, who were not familiar with the team, had him interview other writers. Eventually, the first script of the pilot was written by Elroy Schwartz and Rocky Kalish. Levy was disappointed: "They wrote a very good script, but it would have cost a fortune to produce, full of special effects. I also didn't think it fulfilled everything I wanted."

However, Simon and Ransohoff liked it and sent it off to the networks, and all of them, even CBS which was airing Filmways' mega-hit *THE BEVERLY HILLBILLIES*, turned it down. After three months, Filmways terminated their agreement with Levy, and he found himself "booted out of the Beverly Hills Hotel."



Addams with Carolyn Jones as Morticia, decked out for the pilot's Christmas theme. Levy sold Addams on the idea for the show after seeing a book of his cartoons in a New York store window. Below: After viewing the finished show, Addams sent Levy this cartoon in appreciation.



Levy called his wife and told her to come to Hollywood. He rented an apartment on Olympic Boulevard, met with James and Jacobs, told them his story idea and paid for a new script out of his own pocket. "James had a superb sense of construction for comedy," said Levy. "Seaman Jacobs had written for Bob Hope and George Burns. His strength is the funny one-liner and funny notions. They are

brilliant writers." But Levy also contributed to the script, as he did on all 64 scripts for the show, never taking any credit as was his policy.

They sent the script around again and once again it was rejected. But then luckily, Lew Wasserman at MCA/Universal created a 10-minute presentation reel on *THE MUNSTERS*, sold the idea to Proctor and Gamble and placed it on CBS.

When ABC got wind of the CBS show, Doug Cramer, Levy's contact at ABC, called and asked Levy how soon he could put his show on the air. Levy was stunned. "Here's a show that had been turned down *twice* by *all three networks*. It was Wasserman who had the foresight to see the virtue in *THE MUNSTERS*. That's what triggered ABC, who blindly followed the lead of CBS."

While ABC gave Levy a choice in production companies, he brought the show back to Filmways, because of his high regard for Al Simon. He did, however, make a better deal for himself, except in one matter. "We haggled for a long time over one clause," said Levy. "Their ownership of everything I created. I did not like that. It was an outrageous clause."

Levy signed the controversial contract and the show went full tilt into production. Levy recalled meeting John Astin for the first time in Al Simon's office, cast by Filmways chief Martin Ransohoff. "Marty Ransohoff came out of the bathroom in this beautiful semi-Oriental office," said Levy. "His face was filled with shaving cream. Only his eyes showed. He wore a dirty sweatshirt, he was known for that, and as he talked the foam blew off of his face. He said 'This is the way it's going to be,' and pointed at John Astin. 'He's going to play Lurch and we're going to call the show *LURCH*. It's going to be funny as hell.'

"Now my way of dismissing bad ideas was to say, 'That's a very interesting idea,'" continued Levy. "That's the kiss of death from me, because there's nothing interesting about it. And nothing worthy about it. It was terrible. So, I always used Addams when I had to win an argument, and pointed out that Lurch had never spoken in a cartoon in 40 years, and Ad-

“Without the TV show there wouldn't have been a movie. They did a second-rate adaptation and used little of Addams' work.”

—TV Producer David Levy—



Ted Cassidy as Lurch, one of the characters named by Levy, filming on sets left over from the movie *THE UNSINKABLE MOLLY BROWN*. Inset: Levy cast Cassidy in the role fresh from a basketball career. The movie Lurch just doesn't measure up.



a second interview with his head totally shaved, it didn't win him the role. ABC executive Harve Bennett, who was overseeing the presentation reel's production, turned Coogan down, because he looked too much like ABC's president Tom Moore. "And he did," agreed Levy.

Bennett, who didn't want to risk his job, hired Maurice Gosfeld as Fester. "I had Jackie put in costume and makeup and wait in the wings because I knew Gosfeld was ill," said Levy. "And

Maurice collapsed on the set. There we were with Arthur Hiller direct-ing and Gosfeld was taken off the set on a stretcher. I told Harve not to worry and brought out Coogan in full costume and makeup. I said, 'Harve there's your man.' He said 'By God, I think you're right.' I offered to call Tom Moore if he thought it would jeopardize his job, and he said, 'No, let's do it.'"

dams would think it very incongruous that a deaf-mute would be talking on television. Levy met with Astin later that day for dinner and enthusiastically decided to cast him as Gomez.

Carolyn Jones was also brought on the set by outside pressure. ABC insisted upon the star and had convinced Jones to meet with Levy about the role, who had already decided on actress Joan Huntington for the part, and was lukewarm to the idea of hiring Jones.

"I really was not keen on losing Huntington, who I thought was just perfect," said Levy. "Then I talked to Carolyn, and the first thing that impressed me was her intelligence. She was very attractive, and I could see that she could feel the part. She had an intuitive feeling for Charles Addams."

Levy also set about casting the other roles, and dismissed director Arthur Hiller's claim that Hiller discovered Ted Cassidy (see 22:3:40). They both relate almost exactly the same story of Cassidy's hiring fresh from a sportscasting career. Levy soon okayed Blossom

Rock as Grandmama (her name coined by Seaman Jacobs), Ken Weatherwax as Pugsley and Lisa Loring as Wednesday. Young Loring had blown Levy away in the interview by memorizing two pages of script on the spot after just one reading, and looked like Alice in Wonderland.

Finally the role of Fester needed to be filled, and while Jackie Coogan did come in for

Levy (r) with Addams, Astin and Loring. Paramount owns everything Levy created for the original show because of the contract he signed as producer.



Levy remembered Charles Addams' first viewing of the presentation reel. Addams lawyer sat in front of Levy and Addams behind him. During the show, he heard Addams chuckling and his lawyer guffawing. When the show was over, Addams lawyer turned around and said, "Charles, he's more Addams than you are!"

Levy decided on the title *THE ADDAMS FAMILY*, and when he told Addams, the cartoonist objected immediately. Levy asked him to think of it as a shortened version of *The Charles Addams Family of Characters*. The cartoonist didn't want the characters to have his surname and offered several alternatives including *THE FLOTSAMS* or *THE HARRODS*. Tom Moore suggested *THE HAPPY HAUNTED HOUR*. But Levy's title prevailed.

On the eve of the show's airing, one last tribulation came to the fore: The Lady Colyton, Addams' second wife, then divorced. In the two years they were married, Addams had given her all the rights to his characters. Addams had never told Levy, who found himself in an untenable position. "To the credit of Filmways, they never had to give any of my interest to her," said Levy. "What their deal was, I never did know." But every deal Levy made from then on included a cut for The Lady Colyton.

The show hit the top ten in the first few months it aired. When CBS cancelled *THE MUNSTERS*, two years later, ABC followed suit and cancelled *THE ADDAMS FAMILY* despite its still respectable ratings. But Levy's concept for the show still continues, in Paramount's movie series which likes to pretend it's based on Addams' cartoons. □

Addams Family Values

A preview of Paramount's look-alike movie sequel.

By Michael Beeler

ADDAMS FAMILY VALUES, Paramount Pictures sequel to the 1991 quirky hit comedy, THE ADDAMS FAMILY, opens nationwide at Thanksgiving. The sequel, written by Paul Rudnick, centers around what has become a very dysfunctional Addams household. Fester has married the family's nanny, Debbie (Joan Cusack), who is really a serial killer intent on murdering him and inheriting the family fortune.

Wednesday and Pugsley, meanwhile, have been shipped off to Camp Chippewa, a bright and cheery summer camp for yuppie brats, where they are subjected to group hugs, Disney movies and campfire sing-alongs of "Kumbaya." And Gomez and Morticia are being traumatized at home with their new baby, Pubert Pendragon Addams III. Although born a true Addams, with powdered dead white skin, jet black hair parted in the middle and the faintest hint of a moustache, Pubert succumbs to an illness that changes him into a cooing, pink-cheeked, radiantly healthy infant with blond ringlets who loves to be read to from *The Cat in the Hat*.

The sequel, which began principal photography February 8, 1993 and wrapped both first and second units by the end of July, was once again directed by former editor Barry Sonnenfeld and produced by Scott

Rudin. The original cast returns with Anjelica Huston as Morticia, Raul Julia as Gomez, Christopher Lloyd as Fester, Carel Struycken as Lurch, Christina Ricci as Wednesday, Jimmy Workman as Pugsley and Christopher Hart's hand as Thing. The only change sees Carol Kane replace Judith Malina as Granny Addams.

The new release keeps to the format of the original, with corrupt outsiders attempting to use naive Uncle Fester to get their hands on the Addams fortune. But most of the story takes place outside the Addams mansion, with more interaction between residents of the so-called real world and the family. Wednesday's and Pugsley's parts have been increased dramatically and Thing actually gets to do some real acting.

The movie opens roughly nine months from where the first one ended with Morticia

Best performance by a hand, magician Christopher Hart as the movies' Thing, a depiction that departs from TV inspiration, thanks to improved effects technology.



The movie family, back in theatres for Thanksgiving, a carbon copy of what Levy created for ABC-TV, though the producer wasn't credited in the first movie.

giving birth. Sibling rivalry from the older children results in the kids trying to off the new arrival. They dress Pubert up as Marie Antoinette, complete with a dishevelled powdered wig, black beauty mark and blindfold, and attempts to decapitate him on a full-sized version of their toy guillotine.

Nanny Debbie is a black widow who has made a career of marrying wealthy, lonely bachelors and then killing them to gain inheritance of their estates. Debbie attempts to dispose of Fester on their honeymoon in Hawaii and at their lavish suburban estate. Fester finally catches on when Debbie blows up their home with him in it and pulls a gun on him when he survives the resulting inferno, with Thing coming to his rescue at the last minute.

As in the first film, there is an extensively choreographed dance sequence, this time involving Gomez and Morticia engaged in a torrid tango in a restaurant. And Wednesday and Pugsley are once again scene stealers in a children's play. This time they alter the ending of Camp Chippewa's salute to the first Thanksgiving when Wednesday gives a stirring speech on the atrocities the White man committed against Native Americans. All the camp's misfits, outcasts and ethnics join Wednesday, Pugsley and their new-found friend, Joel Glicker in shooting flaming arrows at the Pilgrims. As the camp burns in the background Wednesday receives her first kiss from Joel before making her escape with her brother.

With everyone reunited at the Addams Mansion, Debbie straps the entire family into matching electric chairs and subjects them to a slide show dissertation of the events that have led her to her evil ways. The family sympathetically reassures her that they understand and wish her luck as she pulls the lever to electrocute them all.

In the end the extended Addams family celebrates Pubert's first birthday, reassured once again that the world is a dangerous place and there really is no place like home. □

STALLONE DEMOLITION MAN

Filming Sylvester Stallone in futuristic science fiction action, behind-the-scenes.

By Sheli Teitelbaum

There are no gangs or drugs. The streets are clean and free from crime. Green spaces abound, the schools work and prisons have made way for golf courses and water parks. People are polite, cussing is discouraged, violence is rare and rioting unheard of. Racial and communal tensions, meanwhile, appear to have gone the way of smog: the freeways are unclogged, the cars get 125 miles to the gallon, the buildings are impervious to groundshaking, and the air is pristine.

Welcome to Southern California?

Circa 2032, no less. In *DEMOLITION MAN*, starring Sylvester Stallone and Wesley Snipes, a science fiction action adventure which Warner Bros. planned to open nationwide October 8, the City of Angels appears to have entered yet another New Age, one that is not only PC, but also PSC—Post Sly's Comeback. After succumbing to the current recession, two more riots and a killer earthquake in 2010, Southern California has recrystallized. The polyglot population has thinned out—or so it seems—and the buildings have been built closer to the ground. But despite utopian tendencies, urban sprawl has raged unabated,



Wesley Snipes as Simon Phoenix, the cryonically frozen psychopath opposing Stallone.

consuming and comprising a metroplex extending from San Diego to Santa Barbara. The catastrophe, it would seem, spared the developers.

Despite severe ozone depletion, which can be inferred from draping clothing styles (see *DEMOLITION MAN* Costume Design, page 31), lotus eaters continue to abound. They provide prime pickings for Snipes, who plays Simon Phoenix, an escaped psychopath from the cryonic coop in which this more genteel society freeze-dries its criminals. Like David Warner's Saucy Jack in Nicholas Meyer's *TIME AFTER TIME*, Snipes wreaks havoc, a barracuda set loose among the millennial minnows.

Governor Cocteau, the sociopath in charge, who is played by British actor Nigel Hawthorne (Sir Humphrey Appleby of the brilliant BBC comedy series *YES, MINISTER*), is tickled by this development, and finds his own uses for Phoenix. The police, only barely adept at directing automated traffic, need an action hero to contain Snipes. But the only one around with yarblockos of sufficient mettle—Sly, of course, as former tough-guy-cop Sgt. John Spartan—has himself been on ice for the last 25 or 30 years.

But can a brawny corpsicle thawed “on the Sly,” so to speak, hack it in this brave, new Wimpworld?

The question certainly appeared foremost on producer Joel Silver's mind. Pacing the set of *DEMOLITION MAN* along the frond-lined walkways of the futuristic Fluor-Daniels Building in Irvine, a Gold Coast community about halfway between L.A. and San Diego, the brown pajama-clad producer could be overheard pondering the filmic fates, while schmoozing into his omnipresent cellular phone.

“Can Sly carry this picture?” he asked. “Can Marco [Brambilla, a first-time feature director and Ridley Scott protégé] hold it together? Can we run against Arnold [Schwarzenegger]?”

Silver's voice drifted off as he turned his back. The casual eavesdropper couldn't help wonder whether he was speaking rhetorically to the press or consolingly to Warner's stockholders.

Though it nods perfunctorily to Orwell and Huxley, *DEMOLITION MAN* appears to have been inspired less by the classic dystopias of modern literature than by the current dystopia of Hollywood. This \$50-million picture written by Montreal *nouveaux arrivés* Peter Lenkov with Dan Waters and Robert (ACTION JACKSON) Renaux is intended, *a la* Schwarzenegger's *THE LAST*



Stallone as titular cop Sgt. John Spartan, unfrozen in 2032 to save L. A. from the depredations of Snipes, with GM's Ultralite concept car as police squad car.

ACTION HERO, as yet another ostensibly wry treatise on adventure movie icons. In particular, it is a contemplation on the decline and subsequent revitalization, first in *CLIFFHANGER* and hopefully now, here, of Sly Stallone's hitherto derailed career.

Stallone's predicament was aptly encapsulated in a recent *New York Times* headline: "All

Right Already—No More Mr. Funny Guy." The article suggested Stallone's forays into comedy in films like *RHINESTONE* (1984) or *OSCAR* (1991) and *STOP OR MY MOM WILL SHOOT* (1992) were not amusing.

Stallone initially took flight from the action-adventure format that spawned him for two reasons. One was his belief,

thankfully reconsidered, that having stepped out of the primordial stew of obscurity first as a triumphant "zhlob" named Rocky, and later reinventing himself as an unspeakable behemoth called Rambo, he could probably manage a final metamorphosis into a class act. Despite his penchant for chomping cigars, trodding on female hearts and consuming the complete works of Edgar Allan Poe, Sly has always fancied himself as, well, a talented and sensitive guy.

"I was quite surprised," said *DEMOLITION MAN* costume designer Bob Ringwood. "I fully expected this monster, nightmare ego, but he proved to be rather a nice guy."

Writer Lenkov, who worked with the actor after turning in his fourth draft, said he, too, found no reason to dismiss Stallone's self-assessment, and came to realize that Sly was not the caricature the press—and his movies—has made of him.

"I knew he was a writer," noted Lenkov, "but he had

some surprisingly strong ideas for the movie. I tailored the script to him as an actor, not as a caricature. And I did it to make a stronger movie, not to kowtow to ego. I was hired to rewrite and I did it willingly because they were good ideas. There was nothing I was opposed to."

The second reason for Stallone's impromptu flight from destiny, he would have you believe, was his growing distress over the political iconization of the *RAMBO* persona. The erstwhile screenwriter complained that he had become synonymous with "mindless, monosyllabic violence, reduced to this prehistoric, bestial caveman." Reagan, he noted, wringing his beefy, bruised hands in despair, had claimed to be inspired by *RAMBO* when he decided to bomb Libyan leader Muammar Khadafi. Saddam Hussein dredged up the association again while in his bunker, complaining that "this is not Rambo."

Sly, one is left to believe,

Snipes and Nigel Hawthorne as Governor Cocteau, future L. A.'s "big brother," production design by David L. Snyder. The film opens nationwide October 8th.





THE SPEC SCRIPT

Peter Lenkov's script sale-turned-Hollywood horror story.

By Sheldon Teitelbaum

After years of aggravation, litigation and near-endless rewrites, Peter Lenkov's script for DEMOLITION MAN is about to reach the screen. "It's been a living hell," said Lenkov. "I'm pleased that it's been made, but all I really want to do now is forget about it." That isn't likely. Particularly not when Lenkov sees the name Faye Schwab credited on the film as an executive producer.

Lenkov, 29, is an English-speaking native of Chomedey, Quebec, a Montreal suburb. A graduate of Concordia University, he showed up in Los Angeles in 1987, another addition to Southern California's million-strong community of émigré Canadians, and one of thousands who have succeeded in getting a foot into the door of the local entertainment industry.

As recounted in a recent issue of *Premiere*, Lenkov got his toe caught in the doorjamb when he went to work, first as an unpaid intern and later as a \$150-a-week office boy, for Faye and Aaron Schwab. His job, he said, was to read incoming books and scripts, compose letters, write production notes and answer phones.

The Schwabs had made their money in real estate and in the garment business. As often happens in Hollywood, they got a hankering to produce movies. Unlike many, however, who print up business cards touting themselves as producers, Faye Schwab actually landed an executive producer's credit on THE MORNING AFTER. Executive producer credits, of course, often go to the unlikely people for the most unlikely reasons. It was enough to impress Lenkov she was the real thing. He thought she might even be able to teach him a thing or two he hadn't picked up at a UCLA extension course on screenwriting.

Lenkov wrote DEMOLITION MAN in his spare time. The story was prompted by an interest in cryonics that began with a TV tabloid show that dealt with the possibility that Walt Disney had had himself frozen. Lenkov wrote, read about and called cryonics researchers and activists in Northern California and soon the story began to take shape. The title was inspired by the song "Bring on the Night," after Lenkov's tape stuck on the phrase "Demolition Man." "It was sort of like a metronome," he recalled. "I flashed on it—what a great title for this movie! The song, to me, was like motion. I kept seeing these images."

Apparently, so did the Schwabs, who maintained their agreement with Lenkov gave them first crack at producing anything he wrote that they found of value. Moreover, Faye Schwab has declared that Lenkov wrote DEMOLITION MAN specifically for her, a contention that Lenkov strenuously denied. The Schwabs tried to option the script, Lenkov turned down the deal, and the Schwabs turned him out, promising further havoc down the road.

Lenkov signed with agent Joel Milner, who sold the script to Carolco for a cool million, allegedly to be divided between Lenkov and Milner's producer client, Howard (RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK)

Stallone as Spartan, cryonically frozen for overzealous police action. Lenkov said he had envisioned Stallone from the start as a futuristic fish out of water.



Lenkov tailored his script to Stallone, as Sgt. John Spartan, in a rewrite. "Stallone had some surprisingly strong ideas for the movie," he said.

Kazanjian. When news of the sale got out, Schwab got her revenge, claiming ownership of the script, which she said her \$150-a-week largess had paid for. Two other individuals came out of the woodwork as well, insisting they had helped Lenkov draft his script. Lenkov vowed to fight it out in court. But Carolco, unable to take the long view as the conflict worked itself through the courts, refused to stand behind him, and backed out of the deal.

According to *Premiere*—Lenkov said he doesn't want to walk through the saga again—Lenkov, possibly undermined by new evidence supportive of Schwab's contentions, issued an offer to settle. Schwab and Lenkov's alleged former writing partners refused it. However, Kazanjian's lawyer showed the script to Joel Silver, who reportedly gave the warring parties two weeks to cease hostilities and bugger off. The Schwabs got an executive producer's credit and \$350,000, and managed to get Warner Bros. to pay some of their overhead. The two erstwhile writing partners also got \$350,000. Kazanjian is said to have received \$400,000, which he shared with his partner Steve Fezekas.

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might have preferred talking things out. Despite stellar earnings and worldwide fame, Stallone ostensibly suffered grievously from the uses to which his fame were put. He said he had become a target of, and symbol for, Third World ire toward America. He also believed he was reviled by many in the Fourth World—the entertainment industry—for having allowed himself to become a Republican Party cipher and stalwart.

Stallone contended that he made a lousy comic actor because his voice was too deep. This is a funnier remark than any he has ever made in public or on screen. However much he fancied himself a wit in the company of cronies—and few in the know would deny the man's intelligence—Stallone was not a comedian.

Thankfully, those of Sly's fans still extant forgave him for having grown too big for his britches. They value him as a guttural action hero, and harbor expectations he will go back to doing what he does well—expectations, moreover, that appear to have been fulfilled and reaffirmed with CLIFFHANGER. Despite a blood vessel that ruptured dangerously in Stallone's right arm during the shooting of DEMOLITION MAN, there are still some thrills left in the 47-year-old star's tired, bruised and abused body.

Comparisons with Schwarzenegger have become inevitable. The amiable Austrian was quick to make one himself in the video store scene in THE LAST ACTION HERO. But unlike his business partner in the Planet Hollywood restaurant chain, Arnold seems to be able to survive self-parody. Indeed, he appears to depend on it. There is something innately and inescapably preposterous about a steroidal Hun with a Colonel Klink accent becoming America's—and consequently the world's—most successful screen attraction. Arnold knows it, and has fashioned an industry from winking at his admirers.

He has also—and one now

SLY'S RIP VAN RAMBO

“Sly is incredibly effective,” said director Marco Brambilla. “His iconography is the antithesis of the future. His methods are brutal, barbaric—and appealing.”



Stallone, teamed up with Sandra Bullock as policewoman Lenina Huxley, a fan of pre-Catastrophe action-adventure movies and Spartan's commando *modus operandi*. Inset: Bullock replaced A LEAGUE OF THEIR OWN'S Lori Petty as Huxley.



wonders whether he knows something we don't—declined to work with Silver on a screen adaptation of a comic book Schwarzenegger was born for—SGT. ROCK. The Bulky One will instead appear in James Cameron's action comedy, TRUE LIES, then in Ivan Reitman's JUNIOR with twin Danny DeVito.

Stallone, in contrast, is a Philadelphia Palooka with a speech impediment who created a less self-aware myth of a *schlemiel* rising from obscurity through sheer pig-headedness and apparent imperviousness both to pain and reality. It is a quintessential American myth that only becomes amusing when played with ramrod angularity. Stallone could have had the wit and timing and sensibility of Woody Allen or Steve Martin. It wouldn't do him any good. He is stuck with his persona, and if he wants to go on earning \$12 million a picture, he has to stop messing with the formula. Wink too many times at your audience, and people will suspect you suffer from

palsy.

“The guy's come back to claim his position,” said Stallone's personal trainer David Lea, who landed a small part in the film. “He's got such an audience, and he wants to get back to where he was. People like Schwarzenegger and Seagal and Van Damme. But Stallone has his own following and he has to give his audience what they want.”

Lenkov said he had always envisioned Stallone in the role of John Spartan. And not just to cut his deal. Just like Sly, Spartan—for Lenkov—was someone who had been rendered, and had rendered himself, nearly extinct.

“I always thought of him as the hero,” Lenkov said. “To me, Stallone was always hard-core action. His character was this guy who just did the job, then went home and drank a beer. My idea was that in the future, a guy like Stallone was a dinosaur. You'd have to get a time machine to pick one of them up and bring them back.”

Silver and director Brambilla understood that Stallone had

played chicken with obscurity. In a sense, they built their movie around his career predicament.

“Sly is incredibly effective,” observed Brambilla from an armchair in his trailer, “because we are using the icon of Sly. We're using all his baggage, the fact that he was in COBRA and RAMBO. And we've therefore made the future and his interaction with it more effective. He is the antithesis of this new society. His methods are brutal and barbaric—and appealing.”

Indeed, Sly's John Spartan is revived at the unauthorized intervention of fetching policewoman Lenina Huxley (Sandra Bullock, who replaced actress Lori Petty after Petty's first dailies ignited sparks among Warner Bros execs rather than with Stallone). Huxley's penchant for violent action finds expression in her obsessive viewing of pre-Catastrophe action-adventure movies.

“We get to comment [on Sly's career],” said Brambilla, “by making Huxley this fan of his antics from the '80s and '90s. Through her, we've given him the possibility to redeem himself. He tells Huxley this [violence] is not the way to solve all life's problems. By making her this action buff, I've been able to make it seem that he is not completely unredeemable, that he gets to observe and comment on his actions, and show that he's matured himself.”

“He's been in deep freeze for 36 years, and in that time he's gained a little objectivity. I think it's interesting to work with an actor who has that kind of persona and larger-than-life baggage, and to use it in this script. It's perfect.”

Despite any misgivings he might have voiced earlier over the phone, Silver appeared to share Brambilla's confidence in Sly's ability to reestablish himself as an action hero and carry the movie. In fact, according to Bullock, Sly found an opportunity to infuse the set with a smidgen of real-life heroism when, earlier on in the production, he burst a blood vessel in his right arm.

“The days after,” she re-

called, "Sly's arm was double its normal size. His arm was so incredibly painful, he kept ice packs on it. But he never complained. You have to admire him."

According to Lea, this happened during Stallone's two-and-a-half-hour daily regimen of weight and fight training. Lea said that Stallone is in superb physical shape, and his arms are easily pumped up. But they are also covered with spider veins, and when one of them popped, the results could have been dire. Stallone's doctors urged surgery. Instead, he gave his arm a rest. Brambilla rescheduled the production slate, moving Stallone's dialogue scenes ahead. There was never any danger of replacing him—only that the filmmakers might themselves suffer from a nervous breakdown at the prospect of rescheduling.

For Silver, Stallone's fortitude merely confirmed his status as one of the decade's enduring male leads. "The action lead has always been the mainstay of the movie business from Gable and Cooper and Stewart," said Silver. "Action leads are an important part of the business, and I'm happy to say I've had good run with a lot of them. I put Eddie Murphy in his first picture. I was involved in Arnold's early movies, and I feel responsible for Bruce Willis. I just think the action leads today have to be fresh, original, unique."

Does using Snipes, who has played engaging heroes himself in *WHITE MEN CAN'T JUMP* and *PASSENGER 57*, as a heavy, constitute fresh, original or unique? "Wesley became a very interesting choice for us as the villain," said Brambilla, "because he was a more psychologically strong villain, and many of Stallone's adversaries in the past were physically strong. So that gave us an opportunity to do something a little different with the characters."

For Silver, ironically, *DEMOLITION MAN* provided a way out of the strict action picture format that has become his forte in movies like *LETHAL WEAPON*, *DIE HARD* and *THE LAST BOY SCOUT*. The attraction of this movie—quite

SCI-FI HIGH CONCEPT

"I thought it was a great idea," said producer Joel Silver, "the concept of two guys from today thrust into the future. I saw it as a reverse of TERMINATOR."



Wesley Snipes as thawed super criminal Simon Phoenix, running rampant in the future, proving a wolf among the lambs, production design by David L. Snyder.

apart from the gazillions of dollars it might earn—was that Silver had never really produced a science fiction movie set in a fabulated future.

"I thought it was a great idea," he said "the concept of two guys from today thrust into the future. I saw it as a reverse of *TERMINATOR*."

"In *PREDATOR* we had a lot of fun with an isolated science fiction idea—an alien thrust back into the past. We experimented with a science fiction idea. But it wasn't a whole science fiction world."

For this first crack at world-building, Silver was intent on doing something different. "In most of the movies I was exposed to, even as a kid," he said, "the future was extremely dismal and dark and post-apocalyptic. Maybe with *CLOCKWORK ORANGE* it became the norm that the future would be more violent and more despicable and unlivable than the present. This movie opens in a dreary, dismal time, a heightened version of the way L.A. would be at its worst. And we end up in 2032, in a nice place with a whole other aesthetic. "Ours is a pleasant kind of

hopeful future. It's maybe PC gone-crazy. But no more than, say, high school. People behave a little better maybe." There's no smoking, no drinking, no cursing, which some people may find refreshing.

"This future is very streamlined, but it's not inhuman," continued Silver. "People are still people. There are a lot of computers and visual screens, everyone talks through fiber optics, and it's all advanced, but they are all still people. There is an early scene in the movie, for instance, when someone calls the police station and the caller is given the choice of either talking to people or getting an automated response. If you want to go to a machine you can, but if you want to talk to a person, they are there."

Production designer David L. Snyder (*BLADE RUNNER*, *BILL & TED'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE*, *SUPER MARIO BROS.*) said the utopian environment of *DEMOLITION MAN* offered a useful counterpoint to the criminality of Governor Cocteau. Moreover, the friendly, ordered environment above-ground offers a Freudian metaphor for the societal re-

pression upon which it is based.

"When anyone tries to create a perfect world on the surface," he said, "you wind up with a place like the film's Wasteland, like Bosnia. Any time someone wants a place to be too perfect, there's a price to pay. To show that Cocteau is really a bad guy, you show the place he created at the cost of half the population being thrown underground. It's a good point to make in today's world affairs."

Brambilla certainly found the premise of this future—and Silver's readiness to take a flyer on him despite his lack of feature experience—new and refreshing. The 32-year-old Milanese had come to Hollywood from Montreal and Toronto, where his work in commercials had brought him to the attention of *ALIEN* and *BLADE RUNNER* auteur Ridley Scott. Brambilla is smart, composed, film literate, and appears to be hip to the exigencies of contributing to a post-cyberpunk filmic sensibility even within the constraints of an action format. He was also—and this may have proved a saving grace given the company he kept on this picture—imperturbable.

"*CLOCKWORK ORANGE* was one of my favorite films," he noted. "I liked the idea of creating a future that was different from some of the heavily textured, decaying futures we've been seeing in *BLADE RUNNER* and *BRAZIL*."

"*BLADE RUNNER*, in particular, is such a milestone in visual design. I worked in commercials for five or six years after that kind of look trickled down into advertising. This was a few years after the film was released, and everyone was talking about its texture, the richness. I, myself, shot quite a few commercials which had that *BLADE RUNNER* look."

"In *DEMOLITION MAN* there are similarities, especially in the Wasteland [an underground environment occupied by the poor, the dispossessed and the criminal], where I am dealing with environments that are textural and are a result of decay. The Fortress scene at the beginning of the movie—that is

about urban decay. It is very difficult to escape something as far-reaching as the design of *BLADE RUNNER* in that case. But for all the future scenes and sets above-ground, the look is very different. It's much more pristine."

But—and yes, one shudders contemplating such a prospect in an action-adventure science fiction movie—Brambilla also thought the movie might leave room for him to make an intellectual stretch. Perhaps this was because he was working on another, possibly less titillating project at the time with Silver: a screen adaptation of the kiddie comic book *RITCHIE RICH*. Sadly—or perhaps not, given the lingering effects of the last recession—that project fell through when star Macauley Caulkin wouldn't sign on as the chipper kid capitalist.

Soon after, in 1992, Brambilla read the fourth-draft version of the script by 29-year-old fellow Montrealer Lenkov. Development hell for Lenkov began in earnest soon after litigation hell with his former mentor Faye Schwab ran its course (see page 18 sidebar). The screenplay was revised another seven or eight times.

Lenkov conceived *DEMOLITION MAN* as a parable about a fish out of water, or, perhaps more succinctly, a bull in a china shop. "The general idea," said Lenkov, "was that there was just this one guy for the job in a world where no one else is equipped for trouble. A guy who believes in the principle of 'one guy, one gun.'"

"That never changed," noted Lenkov, who recently emerged



One psychopath attempts to control another: after thawing, Cocteau (Nigel Hawthorne) attempts to put Snipes to good use.

from Writer's Guild arbitration satisfactorily accredited. "No matter who became involved in the collaboration, that same story always carried through. It was always the same guys doing the same things for the same reasons."

But although Brambilla bought into the premise, he wanted to supplement it with his own concerns. "I wanted to do something satirical about political correctness," said Brambilla, "and how everyone would have to think happy thoughts and to think in a certain way."

Brambilla did not mention Jerome Bixby's classic 1953 short story along these lines, "It's a Good Life." That story is about a telepathic young boy who terrorizes an entire town with his insistence they think positively. It was twice adapted,

first by the original *TWILIGHT ZONE* TV series in an episode starring Bill (LOST IN SPACE) Mummy, and later by its movie sequel. There can be little doubt that Brambilla read it, saw the adaptations, and found them intriguing.

Noted Brambilla, "I also like the idea of how the criminal, Simon Phoenix, becomes a more dangerous criminal as a result of his manipulation by technology—this as opposed to technology creating a better class of citizen. In this instance, they have created a very dangerous criminal, and have given me a lot of leeway in creating a character with Wesley that is larger than life and justified by the story line."

Brambilla acknowledged a debt to the classic literary dystopias in crafting this one. San Angeles is managed by Cocteau, who couches his villainy—and the essential corruption of the society under his thumb—with traditional California feel-good qualities. Draped in billowing mayoral garb that may spark a new fashion trend—or perhaps widespread derision—in Japan, Cocteau is Barney the Dinosaur with a beguiling Brit accent and a velociraptor's cunning and fangs. "He's a sort of a monster," noted Hawthorne, who plays him, "a mayor-governor-fascist. I think of him as a dangerous man of a gentle disposition."

In early drafts of the script, Cocteau appeared as a clearly deranged individual unduly obsessed with the Far East. "He was more fanciful and rarefied," recalled Ringwood. "He grew orchids in greenhouses and had a very Oriental bent to his character. Unfortunately, as the script got rewritten, these strange Eastern preoccupations of the man got left out."

There is certainly no explanation offered as to how a Brit became mayor of San Angeles. One might be inclined to surmise that Hawthorne's TV persona Sir Humphrey finally went too far in his manipulations of a future prime minister, and lost not only his pension and perks but his citizenship too. Alas, there is nary a hint of Sir Humphrey in Hawthorne's Cocteau portrayal, and far more of, say, Dr. No.

Indeed, Brambilla regards Cocteau as a classic, larger-than-life James Bond villain. "He wants to control every element if he can in this new city," he said. "He bases all of his need for this kind of structure in society because of the violence from the past. He keeps reminding people of what life used to be like and how much better and utopian it is now. In his mind he is a hero. But he is basically Big Brother, only in a more sarcastic and hopefully less-obvious way."

Cocteau is assisted in his machinations by Associate

Stallone as Spartan, ready to jump into Steadicam action as a San Angeles cop.



Bob. As played by Glenn (BEETLEJUICE) Shadix, Associate Bob just may prove to be one of the more memorable characters in the movie. The prospect of an endocrinally altered eunuch stealing the show from a star who sweats testosterone provides a delicious irony.

"He has been altered never to want to have anything more than status as an associate," said Shadix. "His loyalties are at first to Cocteau, but he'll always go with the power. When Cocteau is killed, I become Wesley's associate. After he is killed by Stallone, I go to Ed Finlay, who becomes the new leader."

Why would Shadix find such pleasure in playing someone who has lost some of his most vital marbles? "It was an eccentric role," he said. "I loved the idea, the way they described this pristine, ordered society. I thought a eunuch would be a fascinating character to play."

Though Shadix did not take method acting techniques to any hormonal or surgical extremes while preparing for his role, he did research his part thoroughly. He read eunuch-related excerpts from the works of Gore Vidal and from Anne Rice's *A Cry to Heaven*. There was also copious literature about the palace eunuchs of the Chinese Imperial Court under the Ching and Manchu dynasties.

"They didn't have high-pitched squeaky voices," Shadix said. "They were more mellifluous and pleasant to hear."

Shadix also found himself contemplating how the life of a eunuch might attract individuals not necessarily destined for careers as sopranos. "For giving up your sensuality," he said, "you gain incredible access to the seats of power. I see them as having a lot of grace. [Their movement is] very fluid, like a balloon floating beside whoever they are working for. The idea is to be unobtrusive, but to always be near whatever is happening."

The part also presented opportunities for humor. "When Cocteau is killed," he said. "I put my hands over my ears and watch him shot right in front of me. Then it's on to the next

RETOOLING DYSTOPIA

"The 'Big Brother' aspects aren't as exposed as in 1984," said director Marco Brambilla. "It's a more benevolent image, 'Big Brother' with a friendlier face."



Nigel Hawthorne as Governor Cocteau, displaying the future's Japanese styling influence, and Glenn Shadix as endocrinally altered eunuch, Associate Bob.

boss."

The references in *DEMOLITION MAN* to Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, with its accent on chemically controlled social behavior, are, in fact, more pronounced than those to Orwell's more brutal Stalinian satire, *1984*. Huxley, better than Orwell, appreciated the value of catching flies with honey.

"The Big Brother aspects aren't as exposed as in 1984," noted Brambilla. "You see the first ten minutes of the film and you say, 'My God, Big Brother.' But what we've done is layer it into a more benevolent image—Big Brother, but with a friendlier face."

A veteran of several Silver efforts working on the effects end of this movie took this writer aside during a set visit and complained about his own brushes with Big Brother. With apologies to Orwell, he said, if you want an effects technician's vision of a nightmarish filmmaking experience, imagine a director who keeps changing his mind at the last moment.

"Obviously the man [Bram-

billa] is very capable," he said. "Joel [Silver] is a smart movie maker. If he hired the guy, he sees something we don't see. We're not directors. But the guy shoots Coke cans for two days—it's not the same."

Yet, according to Ringwood, it was in fact Silver who constantly changed his mind about virtually every facet of the film, jacking up expenditures, driving everyone crazy, and mostly always to good effect dramatically, aesthetically and imaginatively. "I personally found Marco quite difficult to communicate with," he said, "but when you did get some information out of him, it was actually quite useful. He didn't say much, but what he said was quite relevant."

Snyder added to Brambilla's defense that, often enough, the challenges of telling a story in 30 to 60 seconds prepare one admirably for the rigors of directing features. "Yeah, they are interested in story," he said of the movie's makers, "but there's got to be something to look at too. From my point of view, if a film is good looking, people will be comfortable enough to want to give it a

chance."

"The thing about commercials," observed Brambilla in response to criticism, "is you tend to have too much control over every thing you do in a weird sense, and you have a relatively large amount of time to preplan. So you end up being very closed to thinking on your feet and being able to choreograph action and work with actors. What I've tried to do on this film is to be more open to possibilities as they present themselves in rehearsal. I have been careful about not letting individual style override what the shot is doing or the emotion I am trying to convey."

This is not to say, however, that Brambilla ceased fretting about his precious shots. "There is a certain reflex or instinct that I have which will attract me to make a shot as pretty as possible," he said. "My angles and compositions are very important to me. But I think in the end if you let that become the overriding factor, you haven't affected the story, and I think it's important."

To deflect and protect him from his visual obsessions, Brambilla hired veteran cinematographer Alex Thomson. During his distinguished career, the British-born Thomson has shot over 45 movies and received an Academy Award nomination for his work on John Boorman's Arthurian exercise, *EXCALIBUR*. Other credits include *THE YEAR OF THE DRAGON*, *THE SICILIAN*, *ALIEN 3* and *CLIFF-HANGER*. It was the last picture, shot in the Italian Dolomites, that landed Thomson this gig.

"Everyone was very pleased with that [film]," he recalled. "Sylvester mentioned me to Silver."

"I'd always been a big fan," noted Brambilla, "and I wanted someone behind the camera I wouldn't have to worry about. But it was actually David Fincher [director of *ALIEN 3*] who recommended him [Thomson] to me."

Thomson said he used lighting to give the picture a futuristic feel. "I'm doing it by using different diffusions, diffusing the lens, softening the light, and overexposing very slightly to



STALLONE & SNIPES

The action stars on their science fiction roles.

By Steve Biodrowski

Movies sell fantasy, but audiences want to buy reality. There are several examples of stars whose audience abandoned them after a real scandal contradicted their reel image; likewise, action stars have always benefited from claiming, despite insurance companies and stunt men, to have performed their own stunts. This tendency is even more pronounced with the current crop of Seagals and Van Dammes whose credibility as action icons depends on what belt and titles they've earned. Even a film like *DEMOLITION MAN*, far removed from reality by its science fiction trappings, plays to this expectation by positioning itself less as a dramatic pairing of two actors than as a championship bout between two stars who "do all of their own fights," according to stunt coordinator Charlie Picerni.

In this regard, the film resembles *RETURN OF THE DRAGON* (Lee vs. Norris) and *UNIVERSAL SOLDIER* (Van Damme vs. Lundgren). The difference, of course, is that Sylvester Stallone and Wesley Snipes gained attention as actors first; they're not championship title holders who used their name recognition to launch film careers. Nevertheless, pre-release publicity emphasizes not acting credentials but physical prowess.

"It's been great," said first-time director Marco Brambilla of the help he received from Stallone and Snipes. "Sly's a very collaborative actor. He has such an incredible knowledge and experience of action sequences, having done physical action for so long. It's been a pleasure working with him. I'll design the shots and come up with new and different ways of staging action; then to have someone like Sly and Wesley



Stallone as the cryonically frozen Sgt. John Spartan beefed-up for the role with a daily two-hour regimen of exercise, resulting in a burst blood vessel in his arm.

come in, who are very good athletes, makes the sequences that much more interesting. Also, Sly's character is a little different from what he had been doing recently, which was more comedy-oriented. This is very much a return to a straight-forward action movie; it has some humor, but he plays a much stronger character."

Stallone plays the titular *DEMOLITION MAN*, LAPD Sgt. John Spartan, who thinks nothing of jumping 200 feet from a helicopter to apprehend a suspect. Said Stallone of Spartan, "This is a bigger-than-life

kind of character that I love doing. No matter what it takes to capture his man, he will do it: if he has to blow up a building or drive a truck off a wall, he does. It's actually taking all the heroes who have come so far and putting them into one: you take a Dirty Harry, a Rambo, a Terminator, then mix them all up like a meatball, and you get *Demolition Man*."

Snipes plays Spartan's well-matched adversary, psycho-criminal Simon Phoenix. "My character's outrageous," said Snipes with evident enthusiasm, calling Phoenix "the extremes of everything: extremes of energy, extremes of violence, extremes of humor. He's programmed to be a smart guy, with all the latest technology; at the same time, the criminal heart always overrides technology, always finds a way to hurt somebody."

The two stars may refer to their characters as "bigger than life" and "pure entertainment," but both are concerned with making this athletic escapist fantasy believable on-screen. In fact, Stallone suffered a serious injury as a result of his rigorous

Wesley Snipes escapes from futuristic servitude with some martial arts moves. Right: Marco Brambilla directs.



SLY'S ACTION RECIPE

“You take a Dirty Harry, a Rambo, a Terminator, then mix them all up like a meatball, and you get Demolition Man. It’s all the heroes so far rolled into one.”



Snipes as revived criminal Simon Phoenix, besting the boldly attired but largely ineffectual police force of the future: a job that calls for the frozen Stallone.

training program. “I was working out, and a vein got crushed,” he explained. “I thought I was going to have an operation—they wanted to take out a rib to open up the circulation. So I had to lose some muscle size to let the vein open; otherwise, they would have had to shut the film down. When you see the beginning of this movie, you’ll notice that I get trim later. Maybe it’ll work if I add a line, ‘The food’s not as good in the future.’”

With this dedication to maintaining a commanding physical presence on-screen, Stallone admitted, “I really am trying to prove something to myself. I’ll be like George Foreman of movies. I feel as strong now as when I did the ROCKYs and RAMBOs, no doubt about it. I may not be as fast, but I’m definitely as physical and aggressive. I think those comedy lay-

offs built up a lot of nervous energy! I like a challenge, and when I’m 50, I’d like to see myself doing what other guys are doing at 25. If you take care of yourself, you can go on for a lot longer than you think.”

Snipes also maintained a workout program, but he is not as quick to emphasize competition with his older co-star. “We do different things, so I don’t think there’s a lot of competition,” he said. “We only have three major scenes together, and every time we get together, we fight.”

The filmmakers want to sell the concept of an exciting physical confrontation between Stallone and Snipes based on their different styles of combat. You can hardly blame them. Stallone has wiped so many villains off the screen, it’s hard to generate much suspense without a little helpful Hollywood hype.

“Thank God we have Sly Stallone and Wesley Snipes—they’re so good at what they do, and they’re easy to work with,” said stunt coordinator Charlie Picerni, who goes on to elaborate, “For the fight techniques, Wesley’s more into martial arts—he’s very good at it.”

“My thing is jumps, kicks and flips. His thing is a little different,” Snipes concurred about his on-screen bout with Stallone. “This is actually the first time he’s had so much martial arts in a movie. I mean, we don’t come up to speed like the guys in those Asian films, who’ve been training ever since they were five years old. In the Asian films, you appreciate the artistry and the spectacle of guys jumping off 30-story buildings—I love it, but it doesn’t always sell for an American audience. So the stuff we try to do is more rooted in reality.”

With the emphasis on making the action seem realistic, injuries are always a possibility, but Snipes noted there were no mishaps on the set. “I haven’t gotten hurt; none of my guys have, either. We’ve been lucky. When you have a crew that’s proficient at what they do it makes it a lot easier to do action movies, where the danger factor’s much higher.”

“An action movie is really the most difficult to make,” in-

sisted Stallone. “I wish people could just spend a week with me, then they’d understand. It’s dangerous, time-consuming and it’s expensive. There’s an art to it. That’s why, when other actors sometimes try to do action films, they bomb. You have to believe in a kind of hero complex, in bigger-than-life action where Good triumphs over Evil. You have to have a certain philosophical outlook; you have to have a sense of fantasy; and you have to be fairly physical to do it right. Some guys can do it in one or two films and get away with it, but to be consistent in it, like Clint Eastwood or Charles Bronson, for 25 years, you have to have something unique, I think.”

What does Stallone credit for his consistent success in action films over the years? “I’m nervous about it,” he claimed. “If I’m worried about it, if I’m fearful, then I work hard to overcome that. If it’s something easy, then I could say, ‘I’m just walking through this part.’ So I’m pushing and pushing. I don’t care what it takes to get the right performance and action—if it takes doing a dangerous thing, I do it. If I’m nervous and scared I think something will come out of it. Maybe the audience will see some kind of excitement.”

Publicity, which attempts to blur the line between fantasy and reality, could have potential consequences for actors, especially those with a tough-guy image that might make them a target for someone trying to prove their own toughness. Fortunately, that has not been a problem for Snipes. “Everybody seems to think I’m as cool as the characters I play,” he said. “The hardest core guys that I’ve met all dig my character; otherwise, I’d be a little nervous. I make a decision to choose characters who I know will have a certain amount of

Producer Joel Silver’s action formula, spiced with science fiction: blowing up a GM UltraLite concept car real good.





Stallone and Bullock patrol the Wasteland, the wretched underground underbelly of the future's misfits and underclass.

appeal to the people in the neighborhoods I still hang out in. I live in Brooklyn."

This attitude helps illustrate Snipes' reason for choosing to play a villain after establishing himself as a hero in films like *PASSENGER 57* and *RISING SUN*. "I don't really enjoy those nice-guy roles," he said. "I got picked on a lot playing nice guys. The nice guy is the butt of all the jokes, the last guy to find out who did it, and everybody gets on his case." Did Snipes learn anything from this action experience? "Not to do them roles again! Do a role where you have some say; do a role where you can beat up somebody for a change! Somebody cracks a joke and you crack a joke right back—you

don't have to take it. I felt like, I want to know ahead of time who did it. As a matter of fact, I'll be the one to do it—that's they way to find out!"

Stallone also sees villains as a way of liberating himself from the restrictions of a clean-cut hero image. "I don't want to be good; I want to play the bad guy!" he lamented. "I wanted to do this one, but I thought Wesley would do it better, because he brings a frenetic intensity to the part—very quick, very mercurial. Mine would have been bad but a little bit more foreboding—a little deeper, a little heavier—and that wouldn't have been the perfect combination for this film. *But* believe me, I am looking for the right one. There was a piece done in

China called *THE KILLER*, and I want to play that—badly. So we're talking about [the Americanized remake]." Doesn't Stallone get pretty much what he wants to play at this point? "No! Are you kidding? Maybe Arnold gets what he want, but I have to wait."

Stallone may want to stretch into other roles, but he understands the value of sticking to what he does best, especially after the poor response to his recent comedies. "I understand why they didn't [do as well]. I'm not built for that kind of film," he concluded. "If you want to see comedy, maybe Steve Martin would have been better—or Chevy Chase or Dan Aykroyd or John Candy. I think you should do what you do best, and I feel better at this. If I ever do another comedy, it would be like *TANGO AND CASH*, so it's involved in the same genre. I'm not afraid to step out—I went from *ROCKY* to *FIST* to *RHINESTONE*—but I've come to the conclusion that this is where I best serve the people who want to see me and best serve myself."

Like director Brambilla and producer Joel Silver, Stallone believes the science fiction elements lift *DEMOLITION MAN* out of the action genre and into the category of being a message picture. "This is a very risky concept—it's never been done

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soften the edges. Mainly this is because it's supposed to be a peaceful time. They haven't had any crime or violence for the last 16 years. There's a whole feel of the future as peace and prosperity and softness to the edges of life. As the film becomes more violent, though, I start to sharpen it up."

Thomson said his main challenge in this picture was to come up with a color palette for the cryonics chamber at the start of the film that did not look like a cheap knock-off of *TERMINATOR II*.

"They're on ice," he said, explaining his dilemma, "so it has to look cold and forbidding. But one doesn't want to go to blue—it's become a cliché. But how else do you suggest coldness? I'm using a combination of color filters which are in the blue family, but not steel blue as in *T2*."

Attaining the proper palette was also a concern of production designer Snyder, at least initially. "There was a limited color palette we tried to work with," he recounted, "but if you are shooting exteriors of San Angeles and you are in Irvine and there are 10 five-story buildings in pink granite, you can't very well change that. We started out with a more limited color palette that expanded as

Stallone in *RAMBO*-mode, as Sgt. John Spartan in the prologue present, capturing Snipes at too great a cost.



The action-packed finale: Stallone and Snipes battle in a careening UltraLite.





CARS OF THE FUTURE

At GM, the future is now, but it's sold by Mattel.

By Sheldon Teitelbaum

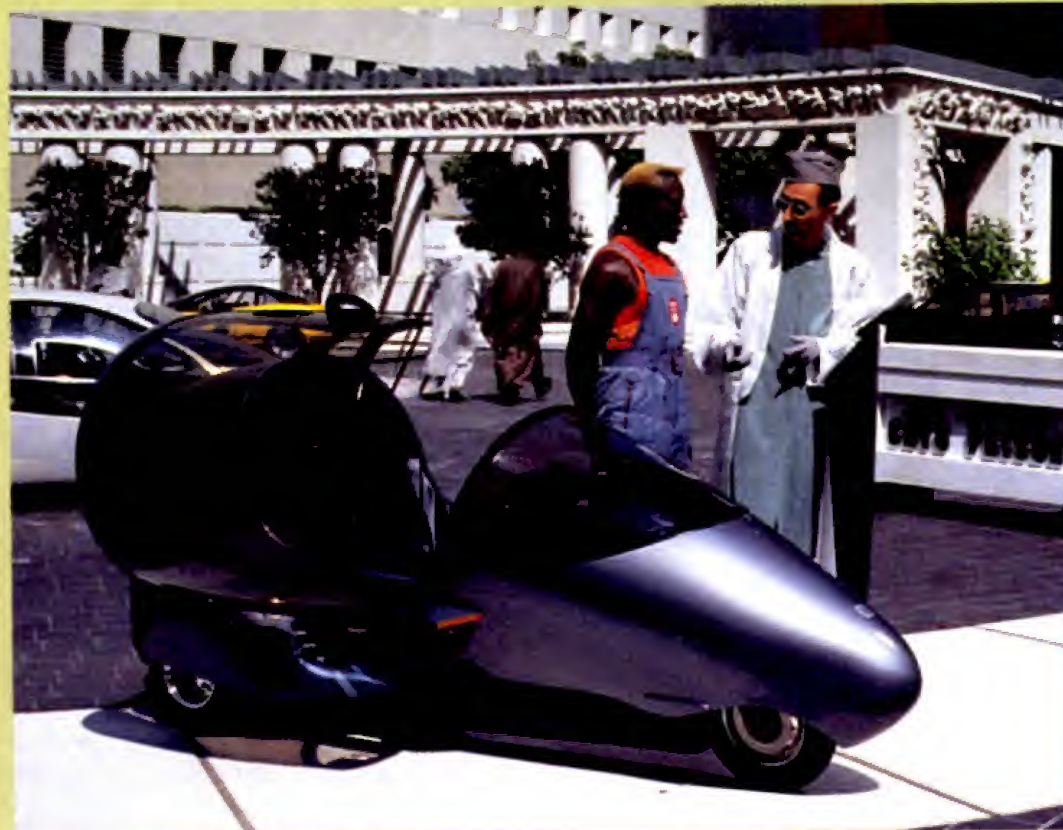
Joel Silver likes to invite his friends to the sets of his movies. The catering is good, and he seems to get a kick out of having them meet the stars and watch him in action. But on the "Taco Bell" set of DEMOLITION MAN, constructed at an enormous aerospace plant near Los Angeles International Airport, a special gleam crept into Silver's eyes as he led visitors into a hanger guarded by a pair of defunct APCs (armored personnel carriers).

"You're going to love this," he told them as he strutted through the door into the shadows. He was right. They did. And so will many others.

Inside the hangar, Silver had amassed a near-priceless array of GM concept cars and concept car knock-offs that will be showcased as cars of the future in DEMOLITION MAN, and eventually marketed by Mattel under a new line of DEMOLITION MAN dinkies.

Concept cars are automobiles custom-designed by car makers around a specific theme, a direction in design or functionality, or a set of estab-

Concept car crowd scene. For their automotive largesse, GM gets to merchandize the cars as Mattel toys.



Snipes and one of the 17 concept cars provided by GM for the production.

lished parameters. Their purpose is twofold: to act as hideously expensive automotive trial balloons that help manufacturers gauge what the public will or won't accept, and to help pay off their costs by generating *ooohs* and *ahhs* at car shows and exhibitions.

Most never reach mass production, although features culled from them can find their way into commercially available vehicles. Thus, the current Camaro incorporates design elements first seen in a 1989 Camero concept car. The Pontiac Banshee, created as an extrapolation on the Firebird, now has a rear wing also first seen in another such automobile.

Most certainly never find their way into movie productions, which is partly why Silver approached GM and secured the right to feature 17 different concept cars in DEMOLITION MAN. That and the fact that Silver has always be-moaned the ubiquity in most

science fiction movies and TV productions of cars that struck him as, well, dinky.

"I was tired of seeing Hollywood set-designer versions of cars of the future," said Silver. "I don't want to name movies I've seen with embarrassing cars in them. But they were goofy and stupid. I wanted to see the car designer versions of cars of the future."

According to Jim Lutz, GM's program manager for the movie's Ultralite cars, Silver first came up with the idea of a joint venture with GM after seeing a picture of the company's Ultralite on the cover of a *Popular Mechanics* magazine. He quickly learned that GM maintained an extensive portfolio of concept cars, many of them futuristic, dating back to 1950. GM quickly recognized in DEMOLITION MAN a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to showcase its wares and market them as toys.

"A movie like this will get a

huge audience," observed Lutz. "More than a billion impressions of our vehicles will be made. We think this shows GM may be part of the future."

Production designer Dick Snyder believes the cars make a seminal contribution to his attempts to fashion a believable future out of those nooks and crannies within California's Gold Coast that still retain a pastoral quality.

"When you are doing the city," he said, "unless you go to a place like Irvine, where we shot part of the film, you can't see too much in the frame when you're shooting wide screen without 1993 creeping into the picture. The cars helped in that. With a combination of composite shots, miniatures and matte shots, and the wardrobes and architecture that we added to the existing architecture, it's going to make up a future world."

Snyder also noted that Syd Mead's Spinner in BLADERUNNER generated more of a buzz than even the machinery under its hood would have suggested. "Those are some of the best cars you've ever seen in a film," he said. He's hoping the GM vehicles will give them a run for the money.

Although a large variety of concept vehicles are slated to appear in DEMOLITION MAN, Silver has transformed the least of them—the Ultralite—into his primary workhorse. In DEMOLITION MAN, the Ultralite serves both as a police vehicle and as civilian automobiles. The genuine Ultralite concept car lent to Silver is used to cart Lenina Huxley (Sandra Bullock) and John Spartan (Sylvester Stallone)

through the streets of San Angeles. Another 10 or 12 fiberglass knock-offs were used for background vehicles.

The Ultralite was first introduced as the centerpiece of GM's Vision 2000 display at the 1992 North American Automobile Show in Detroit. It was designed during a frenzied six-month period in 1991 in response to a set of specific parameters laid down by GM's executives.

"A concept car starts with a clean sheet of paper and thousands of hours of labor," said Lutz. "We had a cross-disciplinary team of stylists, designers, engineers, research scientists, technicians, craftsmen placed on the project. Our challenge was to decide what would it take to make a four-passenger sedan that would do 100 miles to the gallon at highway speeds, and still be comfortable and convenient while retaining automatic transmission and a fully functioning air conditioning system."

To meet these strictures, the engineers realized they would have to design a vehicle that weighed half as much as, say, a Chevy Corsica. This meant turning to new building materials that would assure structural integrity to the vehicle with a smaller mass than any other comparably sized vehicle except, perhaps, for a Yugo. The designers turned to the aerospace industry, where they adapted extremely expensive carbon fiber composite materials.

The Ultralite's specs are impressive even to people who don't fancy themselves car aficionados. The exterior design represents a radical departure from contemporary automobiles while achieving minimal aerodynamic drag and lift. The car's exterior is highly compact, but it retains a lengthy wheelbase that guarantees ride quality. Or, in other words, it affords less exterior bulk than a Geo Prizm with the roominess of a Chevy Corsica riding on a Buick LeSabre's wheelbase. And best of all, the Ultralite only weighs 1400 pounds.

The car, said Snyder, is like a toy for adults. There can be no doubt watching Silver show it

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SCIENCE FICTION ACTION

"I wanted to make every action sequence future relevant," said director Marco Brambilla. "I wanted a car chase that relied on the technology of the future."

we could see we weren't going to be able to change everything that came into the frame. We've achieved a muted, understated background."

Brambilla appeared to achieve some success at assuring temperatures and palettes remained stable in his relations with Silver, while assuring that the producer not ride roughshod over his own efforts. This was all the more surprising given Brambilla's neophyte stature and Silver's aggressively involved style.

"Joel is a hands-on producer," observed Snyder. "It's the only film I have ever done with him, and all I can say is he was there every day on a day-to-day basis. He's just involved in everything."

"I'm the producer," Silver acknowledged. "I'm always there—that's how you produce a movie. There are enormous logistics. A lot has to be done. What we do is work together."

Brambilla gave Silver a run for his money in terms of his own involvement in all aspects of making this movie. He even discovered an interest in that nemesis of the first-time director—special effects.

"There are some effects in this movie," noted Brambilla, "a lot of it physical, in terms of

equipment and stunt sequences. The action sequences were important, and I was concerned that we make every one future-relevant, so we wouldn't just be doing the car chase like the one in LETHAL WEAPON or the one in DIE HARD. I wanted a car chase that relied on the technology of the future to make it different."

"Being a commercial director," Snyder observed, "Marco involved himself in all phases of things. Some directors involve themselves in performance and story acceleration, Marco is also in hair and makeup and wardrobe and costumes."

Sources reported that Brambilla also impressed Silver with his command of the material and his unflappable style. And Brambilla purportedly came to appreciate having a bulldozer with Silver's horsepower parked in his lot. But why did Silver hire Brambilla to make a \$50 million picture rather than go with a proven and familiar war-horse like, say, director Richard Donner?

"I was impressed," he said, "with Marco's work, his aesthetic, his intelligence and his creativity. Richard Donner is by no means a novice," he added, chuckling. "In fact, he's one of the oldest members of the DGA—he's in his 90s [Donner may, in fact, be a year or two young-



Spartan, ill at ease in a too politically correct future, Japanese costume styling by Bob Ringwood.

er]. But it depends. This [movie] demanded a young, fresh outlook. Marco had good ideas and thoughts. He was into it."

Brambilla had his own ideas about why he landed this \$50 million plum: "Based on my work on reel," he said, "I think he saw a lot of work that would translate well into science fiction on this type of scale. My commercial reel has a lot of special effects, a lot of visual pieces. I think that's what attracted him."

"It's been a great relationship," Brambilla added. "He's a driven producer and effective at getting things done, like getting Wesley [Snipes] into the film, putting the cast together, even on getting things from the studio."

But as proved by the loose working relationship that allegedly evolved between AD-DAMS FAMILY director Barry Sonnenfeld and another notorious busybody, producer Scott Rudin, this production has not been bereft of rumors the producer had, in fact, actually shot the film.

"He's not at all involved in the directing," noted Brambilla. "I found this weird, since I had heard the same stories circulating [about Silver's ogre-like qualities]. But I have been very



Wesley Snipes as the cryonically imprisoned Phoenix, a genie for the future.

pleasantly surprised not to have any problem like that. If anything, I've gotten very strong support. But on a film this size, with the coordination and logistics and casting and especially the money required, we could not have done it without Joel."

"Joel has a lot of experience and Marco has a fabulous sense of the visual," observed Shadix. "From what I've been able to witness, they work well together." Costume designer Bob Ringwood noted that Brambilla did not strike him as composed so much as remote. It was this quality, he said, that may have saved him from Silver's excesses.

"I think Marco lives in a sort of 'over there' world," said Ringwood. "He survived very well with Joel by being slightly removed. He's in a slight dream-world, which was a useful and successful defense against Joel. I think Joel is a bully—not a nasty bully, mind you, rather, a wonderful sort of bear, an ogre with a heart of gold—and I think he likes and respects people who stand up to him. If he can flatten them, he just goes on to the next person."

There is no doubt that Brambilla maintained a handle on matters of narrative. He also demonstrated a comfort level dealing with his actors his mentor, Scott, could never ascribe to. But Brambilla also brought to the task a commercial director's concern for appearances and visual texture. He and Silver expended considerable energies developing the proper look for their film, and sometimes looked far afield for inspiration. A primary inspiration for the look of the exteriors, said Brambilla, was the work of landscape artists and architects like the Spaniard Emilio Ambasz.

"Ambasz has done a lot of conceptual projects," noted Brambilla, "many of which have never been built. What he will do when he designs a library or the head office of a corporation is design the landscape around it and incorporate the building into landscape design. He'll put a pond in the middle of this huge golf-course-like grass lawn, and inside the lawn these crystalline glass structures.

"Everything is in harmony

DESIGNING BIG BROTHER

"People have mentioned THE PRISONER as an inspiration for this movie," said production designer David L. Snyder. "I haven't used it as a role model."



San Angeles Governor Cocteau seeks to put Phoenix to use as a political tool.

with the environment. I used a lot of his material for inspiration in selecting locations and matte paintings and determining how the interiors would tie into the exteriors."

In DEMOLITION MAN, the look is minimalist—Bauhaus meets Levias Woods. This influence finds particular expression in the Wasteland—the city-below-the-city where society's free-thinkers, non-conformists and dispossessed live. Snyder said he didn't have to go far afield to make this concept immediate. "When we were downtown blowing up the building," he recalled of the opening Citadel sequence, "a few blocks away there were real homeless people who could have appeared in our movie as [human] scrap."

Snyder said that setting the stage for San Angeles reminded him of an old Warner Bros cartoon in which the city collapses in ruin and a truck comes in and paves everything over. Either that or Albert Speer's plans for Berlin after a Nazi victory. These entailed demolishing all the homes that had the misfortune of occupying space where he wanted to place his miles-

wide expanses, promenades, halls and monuments to Aryan conquest.

Snyder said he tried to avoid using film as a reference. "Marco likes to do that. I prefer using reality-based references because the last thing I want to do is something someone has already done in a film."

Snyder believed that Brambilla's enthusiasm for pop culture may, in fact, be what sets him apart from mentor Scott. "I think the difference between Marco and Ridley is Marco may be interested in subjects that aren't as deep as [those that interest] Ridley."

The production design of DEMOLITION MAN does seem to reference some film and TV sources. "People have mentioned [British TV show] THE PRISONER as an inspiration for this movie," acknowledged Snyder. "I haven't used it as a role model. If we used any film as a basis for what this looks like I'd say it's the Italian film, THE CONFORMIST. You begin with this massive scale which you are sort of humanizing. There's no relationship to human scale."

"In this area," observed

Brambilla, "we have a more deconstructivist approach to the architecture. It's still very stylized. I'm trying to make each environment almost operatic in tone. The opening sequence in the fortress is overblown—Dante's *Inferno*. But in general, we have a minimal approach characterized by spartan interiors, symbolic pieces and minimal set dressing. Emotionally it is a very cold world."

Also reminiscent of Dante's *Inferno* are the film's opening cryonics sequences, which sound like a cross between Harrison Ford's freezing in carbonite in THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK and the scene of suspended bodies in COMA. Adherents of cryonics tout their techniques as potentially life-saving. But from the grimaces of those put through the process for penal purposes, one recognizes it for obviously cruel and unusual punishment. In fact, the images cast on screen give the process of deep-freezing a definitely hellish connotation.

Silver and Brambilla had hired Snyder to help lower the temperature of their movie a few degrees further. Snyder had worked as art director on possibly the coolest-looking science fiction movie ever—BLADE RUNNER. Though often credited with having been the production designer on that film, he actually worked under production designer Larry Paul. The buzz about his work on SUPER MARIO BROS got him the job with Silver.

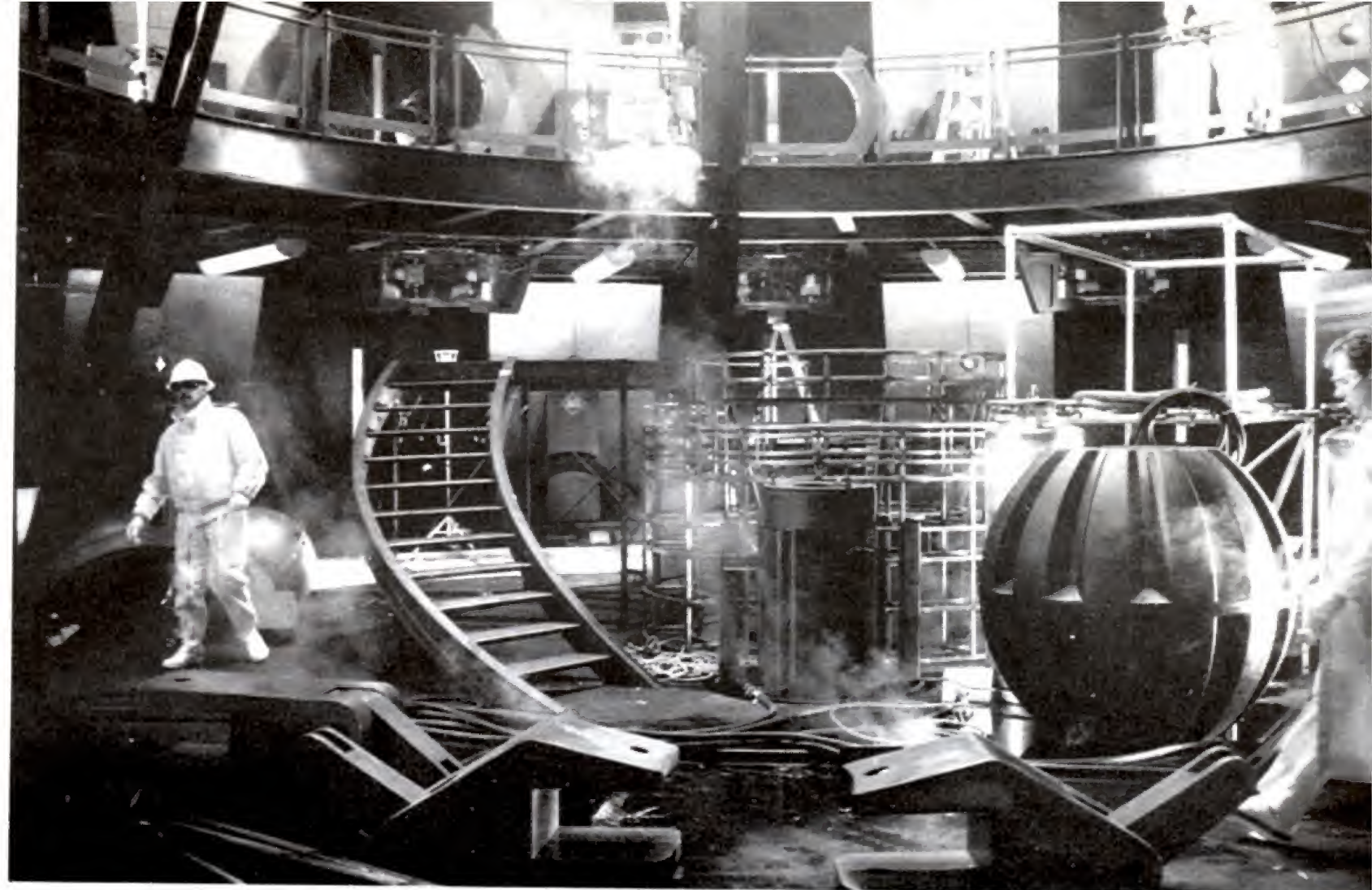
By the time shooting began on DEMOLITION MAN, people were talking about the prospect of another Los Angeles riot. The summer before, four Los Angeles Police Department officers were acquitted of charges levied by the state that they had criminally beaten black motorist Rodney King. While DEMOLITION MAN moved into production, the same four officers faced a new set of federal charges that they had violated King's civil rights. And as the film gave play to the idea of a Southern California landscape vastly altered by two subsequent riots, tensions mounted in Greater

Los Angeles in general and on the sets of *DEMOLITION MAN*, as a new verdict became imminent. The apocalypse, it seemed for a time, might be closer than anyone—possibly even Silver and Brambilla—had imagined.

One intimation of this gathering disquiet on the set was a relative dearth—with Silver's the notable exception—of cellular telephones. The unit publicist, who needed his phone to set up interview schedules, found himself forced to *schnor* other people's phones, or to run to public telephones. Thoughtfully, he had left his own device with his wife at his home in Los Angeles in the event she needed to summon assistance.

As with George Miller's *THE ROAD WARRIOR*, *DEMOLITION MAN* begins with an apocalyptic prologue. This one depicts Los Angeles in Week Four of Riot Three. A third riot was postulated because banking on a second remaining an unrealized near-future possibility by the time *DEMOLITION MAN* was in the can would have been too risky. Hollywood is littered with otherwise fine films that have been overtaken by events. The film makers were cognizant of the risks, said director of photography Alex Thomson. "When the picture was planned, they had the present situation in mind. The uncertainty certainly affects me mentally, but not what I do. It is portentous—I must say I hope not too so.

"The current situation," noted Brambilla, "set up the necessity for the more stringent crime control that they exercise in this society. If we keep getting involved in situations where we



The cryochamber where criminals are put on ice, the challenge was to make it look unlike *TERMINATOR 2*.

have very little control of the criminal element, society as a whole is going to want more control to be able to survive. So some of the elements of this film are extrapolated from things that could happen."

When little is known, rumors abound. Because of its location, the Irvine set of *DEMOLITION MAN* seemed rocked by speculation about the timing of the King verdict. The cameramen in charge of video monitors provided a hub for information dispersal because they could tune in, when no one was looking, to the commercial TV stations. No one seemed immune to the air of speculation—not even actor Nigel Hawthorne, who was a temporary guest in the City of Angeles. Though he took the part to gain legitimacy in motion pictures, Hawthorne said he harbored no anticipation of ever having to

reside here—a matter that may provide some relief to the NRA.

"I'd advocate banishing all guns," he said, while Snipes, sporting blond hair, gray overalls and an orange fishnet top, wandered about with a deadly-looking weapon. "I see no value in keeping guns. We've got a dangerous period now, and I think everyone is holding their breath a little."

Among those seemingly most affected by the prospect of new urban unrest was Sandra Bullock, the young, German-educated actor who plays screen violence vixen Huxley. Bullock has appeared opposite Kiefer Sutherland in *THE VANISHING*, Robert Duvall in *WRESTLING ERNEST HEMINGWAY* and River Phoenix in *THIS THING CALLED LOVE*. Her TV experience has included the made-for-TV film *THE PREPPY MURDER*, the miniseries *LUCKY CHANCES* and her breakthrough series, *WORKING GIRL*.

"I get angry," she said, toying with a pocket-sized fax machine attached to her policewoman's gunbelt. "There's so much ignorance and fear out there. I have been on the edge for the past couple of weeks. I am very aware of what is going on. I haven't had time to relax. I am incredibly in tune, and it frightens me because I haven't brought life into this world, and I can say that at this stage I never, ever will."

It is hard to tell, though, whether this stems from her dismay over the prospects for this city or from her distaste for a future in which sex can only be experienced through the medium of virtual reality. Brambilla said that the society depicted here resembles that of Japan in more than costumery. "Everything here is regimented and formal," he said. "But under the surface there's a great deal of anxiety."

"This future is very sedate, very clean," concurred Bullock during a lull in the day's shooting. "In these times, what with civil unrest and AIDS, a society like this would seem to be the next logical step. Everything is monitored, censored, purified, cleaned. Everyone is incredibly safe. We might end up in a place like this if we aren't careful about how we do things.

"My prescription? Sure, live on the wild side. But don't kill people while you're doing it."

Bullock took another walk on the wild side when she accepted the part originally awarded Lori Petty. Though she had read the screenplay prior to Petty's casting, the circumstances of Petty's departure left Bullock with little time to become comfortable with her new role or with her fellow actors. "This was really a fast thing," she recalled. "Although I had read the script, I didn't get to audition. I had no time to

Stallone does his own stunts as Spartan, with trainer David Lea at far right.





Glenn Shadix as Associate Bob, serving Phoenix once Cocteau is history.

think.”

One of the things she chose not to think about was why she had been called in to replace Petty. “They had their reasons,” she said. “It was none of my business. But it sure affected me the first few days. I don’t recall anyone being nasty to me. But I wasn’t checking everyone’s reactions.”

“I was more concerned with getting the character down so I didn’t look like a complete fool. This is a really funny part. She’s [Huxley] so enthusiastic about what she’s doing. She so badly wants to see action happen that she spends most of her hours at home watching laser disks of every action hero. Her terminology is a little backward—instead of ‘Let’s kick his ass,’ she said, ‘Let’s lick his ass.’”

“The language is such a huge thing. I have to make tech talk seem sexy in a love scene. I can take lines from a soap opera and find an underlying meaning, making them alive and rich.” Bullock said she finds herself admiring the stars of *STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION* and *STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE* for their ability to invest high-tech Trek talk with such dramatic meaning.

According to Silver, the ousting of Petty owed to a clear-cut case of belatedly realized miscasting. “It just didn’t work out,” he said. “It’s a very

difficult role. Huxley is not a person of our time. She [Petty] was trying very hard and we weren’t really sure about her. She only worked for two days and we all agreed to go to another direction.”

At least one of Petty’s associates, actor Hawthorne, regarded the actor’s hasty banishment as other than business as usual. Indeed, he said he found her release “deeply shocking.”

“I had never experienced that sort of ruthlessness,” said Hawthorne, whose only other filmmaking forays to date had been the Clint Eastwood picture *FIREFOX* and Sir Richard Attenborough’s *GHANDI*. “It had never come into my orbit. They just found that she looked tired on the screen. That was the reason I heard. I am sure there are wheels within wheels, but I know nothing of them.”

“I know she was very hurt. I took her out to lunch the day after she got the sack and she was hurt, of course, she told everyone she’d be in this picture—it

PREDICTING THE FUTURE

“What with civil unrest and AIDS, a society like this would seem to be the next logical step,” said Sandra Bullock. “Everything is monitored and censored.”

was in all the papers, and if I’d been fired I’d have been hurt. They paid her—they were very honorable on that count. I think she has a phenomenal talent and a bright spark, and if this film wasn’t right for her, for some reason, she will go on to bigger things. She has a mad quality which is very appealing.”

Brambilla said the decision to fire Petty proved difficult. The problem, he says, was that Sly just didn’t respond to her.

“I liked her as an actress when we hired her,” said Brambilla. “When she came in and read for me and we tested her, I was absolutely blown away by her sense of comedy and timing. The problem we had was the chemistry with her and Sly. We shot this love scene early on and I just didn’t see the attraction in the relationship working out. It made the role less believable. We all thought we’d do better.”

“We went for more on-the-nose casting with Sandy [Bullock]. I was initially concerned because I had tried to be less obvious with the female lead. But after her first two or three days I was happy we got someone with that comedy ability.”

Glenn Shadix, the rotund character actor who plays Governor Cocteau’s fastidiously loyal yet fundamentally fickle eunuch deputy, Associate Bob, tried to be tactfully philosophi-

cal about Petty’s departure. “Lori was terrific. I think her problem was the specifics of the part and what the producers thought was called for. I worked with her one day and don’t know what happened. She had a lot of energy to bring, and [staying with her] was a choice they could have gone with.”

“As actors, we are only in competition with ourselves. If the real essence of a person is not what the script calls for, in the opinion of the producer, that brings changes. It’s very painful. Actors seem to bind very quickly. It was sad to see her go.”

Whether it will be thrilling to see *DEMOLITION MAN* come to the big screen, of course, remains to be seen. Everything about this movie suggests a big-budget treatment of a fairly pedestrian story that may depend on its individual moments of charm, as well as on the allure of its action heroes and breakneck pacing for its salvation. Said costume designer Ringwood, “I only hope they didn’t increase the action at the expense of story and content.”

With a parent’s pride, however, Lenkov characterizes the movie as “complex.”

“People will see things they haven’t seen before,” he promised. “There’s social commentary, the characters are strong—they’re not cardboard cutouts. This guy [Spartan] is going through a dilemma that’s tearing him apart. He wants to see his daughter. He’s been set up for a crime he’s not sure he committed.” Such travails, he said, are the stuff of high drama.

“If you look at Joel Silver movies, they’ve only gotten better over the years. This is an action film that has a strong story and [solid] social commentary and will look like something you haven’t seen before.”

Or not. □

Directing Stallone as Spartan, producer Joel Silver and Marco Brambilla (r).





SCI-FI COSTUME DESIGN

Bob Ringwood's anthem was "Death to Spandex!"

By Sheldon Teitelbaum

If costume designer Bob Ringwood can be said to have a rallying call, it is one he shares with a growing number of fellow designers toiling in the science fiction movie and TV arena: "Death to Spandex."

The clothing he designed for *DEMOLITION MAN* runs the gamut of billowing yuppie fashions, sharply cut military uniforms, Japanese kimono-inspired ceremonial pieces and retro-fashions cobbled from recycled automobile parts. Nearly everything worn in the movie looks both futuristic, and, at the same time, as if people seeking some modicum of comfort might actually deign to wear them.

"I hate the Dan Dare [a '50s British comic book] school of design that no one has ever worn, and which will never catch on," said Ringwood, who has outfitted Arthurian England in *EXCALIBUR* and the planet Arrakis in *Dune*. "Spandex all over you ties you up. It only works in gyms. It's very hot and uncomfortable."

The costumes designed for *DEMOLITION MAN* reflect a number of social and aesthetic conditions. Eighty years from now, for instance, the ozone layer has been completely shot to hell, hence the need for loose-fitting robes that permit some movement of air while covering most of the body. Sunhats, gloves and UV shades and visors are *de rigueur*.

The Far East, meanwhile, has become the dominant cultural and economic force in the world, hence the ubiquity of Asian and Indian motifs not even seen today in Japan or India. The police



Ringwood's fascist police garb amid the ethnic grunge look of the Wasteland.

sport uniforms that reflect the quasi-fascist nature of their society. And the poor use whatever they can find in the scrapheaps for their own coverings. But perhaps the greatest single influence on the clothing designs adopted by American society in *DEMOLITION MAN*, said Ringwood—who considers it a bloody good joke—are the fashions favored personally by producer Joel Silver.

"In a funny way," said Ringwood, "Joel wanted the costumes to be styled on Joel himself. I think Joel identified with the character [Cocteau]."

"He has a whole range of outfits," said Ringwood. "They are always the same—a huge shirt and pajama trousers. He's got them in brown, in blue, even in white. I just took the idea of them being very comfortable and sort of blended them in with that."

Ringwood noted that the innate sexual conservatism of 2032 San Angeles is not intentionally reflected in the fashions

despite the fact that physical sex between consenting adults appears not to be widely practiced. Quite unlike as was the case in, say, Victorian England, people and particularly women, are permitted to show flesh at night, when the sun's deadly rays are held temporarily in abeyance.

"The poor, meanwhile, have all been pushed underground. My idea was everyone would make everything out of recycled stuff—old army clothes and automobile tires...I tried to blend Japanese-style armor with American football wear and made it with old tires. They were wearing all sorts of bits of automobiles. The look was slightly *MAD MAX*, but not punky."

Ringwood is not particularly happy with the Panzer Corps-inspired police wear he fashioned. The problem with these designs is that they were too butch. The San Angeles police are supposed to be a bunch of effete dabblers, and the point,

acknowledged Ringwood, would have been made quite satisfactorily had an effete cast of actors and extras been placed in these dashing macho uniforms.

"But the people they got were all tough-looking, and I thought it was a bit silly." The police tunics do, however, have at least one whimsical element that should stand out—cops of the future are equipped with miniature fax machines attached to their shoulder straps. "It was just a doodle," said Ringwood. "I did a drawing with a communications radio fax machine on the shoulder strap and Joel went absolutely mad for it, and it was in."

Ringwood said that Silver made life very hectic for him by constantly revising his needs and wants. "The hardest thing about this movie for me was getting it made with Joel. It was a hysterical nine months. Joel was endlessly changing ideas. For instance, we changed the

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Ringwood's "found" Wasteland look for Wesley Snipes as Phoenix included junk and rubber tires.



TIM BURTON'S NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS

**The making of a stop-motion
fantasy film masterpiece.**

By Lawrence French

Once upon a time at a studio in Burbank, Calif., a young animator drew a series of bizarre Halloween characters who plot to take over Christmas from Santa Claus. He envisioned it as a 30 minute holiday special to be done in stop-motion animation. However, the idea was considered too risky at the time for a conservative Disney management. It was quickly consigned to the depths of the studio vaults, where it languished for many years. The young animator went on to direct *BATMAN*, while the studio regime was ousted by angry villagers—err, stockholders. Ten years later the animator returned to his ancestral studio home to find a revitalized Walt Disney headed by Jeffrey Katzenberg, chairman, and David Hoberman, president. With four films grossing over \$400 million behind him, it wasn't too difficult to convince them to back TIM

BURTON'S NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS. After two and a half years of painstaking work the film opens for the holidays, October 16. If it grosses many millions, everyone will live happily ever after.

Such a happy ending is far from assured, but given Disney's and Tim Burton's track record, a boxoffice take of \$100 million doesn't seem unlikely. Ironically, Burton is now delighted that the film didn't get made, back in the early '80s. The reason being he had yet to work with such key collaborators as director Henry Selick, composer Danny Elfman, or scripter Caroline Thompson, nor had he developed the clout to expand his original idea into a full-length feature film.

When Burton initially conceived of the story, he was in-



The movie's cast of puppets and their creators (l to r) Elise Robertson, Bonita DeCarlo, T. Reid Norton, Michael Wick, Jeff Brewer, Facundo Rabaudi, Grace Murphy, Liz Jennings and Lauren Vogt, the elves of Burton's fantasy toy shop.



fluenced by such holiday specials as Dr. Seuss' *THE GRINCH WHO STOLE CHRISTMAS* (narrated by Boris Karloff) and *RUDOLF THE RED-NOSE REINDEER*. Burton wrote a short poem based on Clement C. Moore's *The Night Before Christmas*, and envisioned the sepulchral tones of Vincent Price's voice for the narration. The original story has since been expanded by Thompson, who wrote *EDWARD SCISSORHANDS* for Burton. It follows the exploits of Jack Skellington, the leader of Halloweentown, an imaginary land where the ghoulish citizens labor year round to bring the real world a night of delightful terror every October 31st. "It's basically a kind of blue-collar working town," said Burton. "Their sole function is

While taking over Santa's route on Christmas Eve, Halloweentown's Jack Skellington is surprised by a little boy! The feature returns Burton to his puppet film roots, producing a dream project he originally developed while an animator at Walt Disney. Below: Jack and friends greet the kidnapped Santa in Disney's Touchstone production of Burton's story.





PUPPETMASTER TIM BURTON

*The dark poet of fantasy
on his dream project.*

By Lawrence French

Tim Burton's *THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS* has turned out to be his dream-come-true project, one he conceived over ten years ago, and finally nurtured to the light of day. "Initially, ten years ago I was going to direct this," said Burton. "I tried to get it going as a short film, a TV special, Home Shopping Network, anything that would take it, but I couldn't even give it away back then."

For a film director, Burton can be strangely inarticulate, which makes working with people who understand him quite

Jack steps himself in Christmas lore to launch his campaign for Halloween to take over the holiday.



important. Screenwriter Caroline Thompson, who also wrote *EDWARD SCISSORHANDS* for Burton, was one of those people. "She's one of the few people who knows what I mean, without me having to speak," laughed Burton. "I really do appreciate that. She takes the time to understand me."

Burton, who was born and raised in Burbank, right down the street from the Disney studios, always wanted to work in animation. When he began to work at Disney as an animator, he recalled, "I no longer wanted to be there. After about a month I wondered what I was doing there. Now it's sort of nice to be working at Disney on something I feel very passionate about. After ten years it's like a surreal dream, to be watching the shots come in and see everything unfolding so beautifully."

In *NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS*, Burton has created once again a character, Sally the rag doll, who has been sewn together and created by a scientist, like *EDWARD SCISSORHANDS* and *FRANKENWEENIE*. "I think there's something about [those characters] that represents the discombobulated nature of people in some ways," said Burton. "Sally is more of a humorous version of that kind of character."

Burton's previous films have always had bizarre characters and makeups, but because of the skeletal nature of *NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRIST-*



Burton with Jack and Sally, his puppet brainchildren brought to life at last.

MAS lead Jack Skellington, Burton felt it couldn't be accomplished with live action. "The way that Jack looks," said Burton, "it pretty much had to be animation. You're not going to find an actor that is Jack, even with makeup. I've never liked animation just for its own sake. I think it should serve whatever the story is."

Although Burton's films have been enormously successful, he has usually gone through battles with the studio hierarchy over his unique vision. Surprisingly enough, he has been given free reign at Disney. However, he suffered an unpleasant incident last April, when his *ED WOOD* feature biography was canceled at TriStar pictures.

Burton insisted that it be filmed in black and white, which did not please TriStar executives. Disney was quick to pick up the project, which has been most gratifying for Burton.

"I kind of feel like Ed Wood," exclaimed Burton. "That was the hardest incident I've ever been through. Disney has been really great, because they're into it, and they understand how I want to do it, which sort of surprised me. I can understand what Ed Wood went through [trying to get his films made]."

For Burton, Ed Wood will be another character like Jack Skellington, who tries desperately hard to succeed, but

continued on page 60

Oogie Boogie, the heavy of Halloweentown, exhorts his skeleton henchmen.



to perform the holiday for us.”

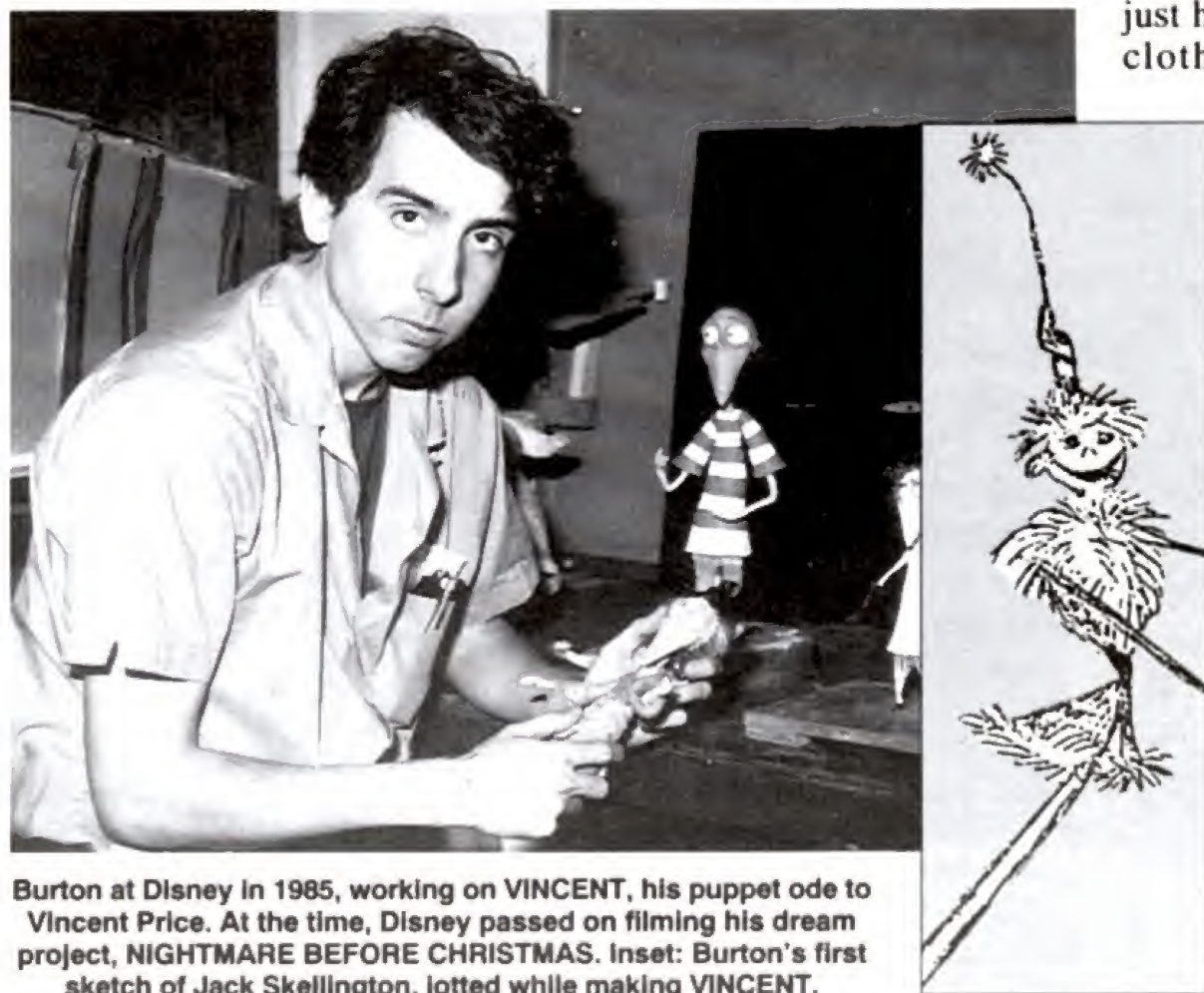
Although Burton started at Disney as a cartoon animator, working on such features as *THE FOX AND THE HOUND* and *THE BLACK CAULDRON*, he always saw *THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS* as a puppet animation film. “I grew up watching Ray Harryhausen movies, *JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS*, *KING KONG* and those kinds of movies,” said Burton. “I find there’s a real power to stop-motion and a kind of nostalgic feeling as well. It has a funkiness and a feeling that’s hard to describe. It gives a certain kind of reality and because all of the characters in the movie are so passionate about what they’re doing, it seemed like the best way to do it. It’s a little cruder than cel animation where you can do one pose, then another and test it and hone it down. With this there’s more risk involved. You can move and move and not know exactly where you’re going sometimes. That, to me, is very exciting.”

Burton’s first stop-motion film was the short *VINCENT*, made with artist Rick Heinrichs in 1982, around the time he first conceived of *THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS*. At that time Heinrichs sculpted some of the characters they had envisioned, and showed them to other artists at Disney. One of them was Henry Selick, a former Disney artist who ended up directing the film for Burton. Selick remembered being enthralled by the early work he saw of the project.

“Everyone who worked at Disney at the time saw in Tim someone really exciting, whose ideas and drawings were like a breath of fresh air coming to the studio,” said Selick. “But management at that time was just terrified of taking any risks whatsoever.” As a result Disney owned the story but was unwilling to back it, just as a few years later they allowed Burton to actually go ahead and make *FRANKENWEENIE*, but refused to release it. When that short film was completed they became frightened of its PG rating and off-beat humor, and declined to pair it with a reissue of *PINOCCHIO* as planned.



“I grew up watching Ray Harryhausen movies and KING KONG,” said Burton. “I feel there’s a real power to stop motion.”



Burton at Disney in 1985, working on *VINCENT*, his puppet ode to Vincent Price. At the time, Disney passed on filming his dream project, *NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS*. Inset: Burton’s first sketch of Jack Skellington, jotted while making *VINCENT*.

Burton remembered the atmosphere at the studio as being “like a weird sort of puberty. It was a strange place,” he said, “because everybody was smiling and really nice, and there was a charming atmosphere, but they were all freaking-out all of the time. It was like being in that TV show, *THE PRISONER*, where you can’t leave. They’d say they wanted to do new things, but they really didn’t. I had five or six projects that never went anywhere.”

However Burton’s short films *VINCENT* and *FRANKENWEENIE* were seen at other studios, and it wasn’t long before he was offered a job (in 1984) to direct his first feature film, *PEE WEE’S BIG ADVENTURE* at Warner Bros. Henry Selick also left Disney and moved to San Francisco, where he worked on John Korty’s cut-out animation film *TWICE UPON A TIME*. Selick drew elaborate storyboards for all the Will Vinton Claymation sequences in *RETURN TO OZ*, then worked at Colossal Pictures where he joined a long

line of animators who have worked on the Pillsbury Doughboy commercials. More recently he animated a series of station I.D.’s for MTV, which led to a short avant-garde film called *SLOW BOB IN THE LOWER DIMENSIONS* (1990), which combined live-action, stop-motion and cut-out animation.

Meanwhile Tim Burton’s agent went to the new management team at Disney, to alert them to the Burton property they still owned, buried in the vaults. Disney president David Hoberman recounted that “we sent researchers down into the files to see what we had, and they came back with a three page poem called ‘Nightmare Before Christmas.’ Tim said he wanted to do it as a stop-motion feature film, and we found it to be an exciting proposition. We had no idea what we would be in for, the complexities involved and so-forth, so it was a big risk, but we had been trying to get Tim back to the studio for many years.”

With Disney showing inter-

est, Rick Heinrichs suggested Selick for the arduous task of directing the project. Selick agreed, and began to do some crude tests in order to convince Disney to go ahead with the film. “Those early tests were done very quickly at Phil Tippett’s studio in Berkeley,” recalled Selick. “The puppets weren’t well designed, so we just had some wire frames with clothes on them doing a few movements. Tim could see where it was going, but for the folks at Disney it was a little harder. They had some concerns, and we explained how we’d deal with all the problems. How Jack would speak, how things would improve and they stayed with us.”

Then we did a second level of tests, and things improved a lot. As the tests came in they breathed a big sigh of relief. I’m sure they were nervous, because Tim doesn’t do what they normally do. They were willing to take a chance with this,

just because Tim has been so successful with nothing but unusual films.”

Noted Hoberman of the risk, “We were happy to take it. If you just stay within the borders, you’re not going to get an opportunity to do something out of the ordinary. We think it’s a wonderful story, with a lot of emotion, and we knew we’d get something very unique and innovative.”

After the results from the second level of tests, the next hurdle to jump was turning the story into a finished script. The original poem had evolved into a 12-page treatment, and a writer was brought in to expand it into a full screenplay. Burton also enlisted the services of composer Danny Elfman, to write songs for the film based on the treatment. Elfman had written the scores for all of Burton’s previous feature films, but wasn’t quite sure how to proceed on a musical.

“We just started to wing it,”

said Elfman. "Neither Tim nor I knew how to begin. We had never done a musical before. So Tim would tell me a little of the story, and then I started writing the first song. Tim would come back a few days later, and I'd play the song, and he'd tell me a little bit more of the story. For instance, Jack is going to discover Christmasland for the first time. There's this wonderful ecstatic feeling Jack experiences, so all I have to do is express that, by climbing into Jack's shoes. So I wrote the song 'What's This?' Then I'd write the second song, and pretty soon we had finished ten songs.

"I finished all the songs in about six weeks. It was much easier than I expected because Tim and I are so much in sync, we didn't even have to talk about it. It was a lot of fun too, because Halloween has always been my favorite night of the year. For me, writing something in the spirit of Halloween is like Mother Teresa writing on charity and sacrifice. It's just second nature to me. It was really an organic process, because we basically started to tell the story in the songs as we went along."

Although Elfman was comfortable with the Halloween music, he was not quite as thrilled to do the Christmas songs. "Tim loves Halloween and Christmas," he said. "He always puts Christmas stuff in his movies. I always say, 'Tim, why do you have to do that?' For me it's depressing. I'm a lifelong massive depression person at Christmastime."

"That's why I love Christmas," retorted Burton.

With Elfman's songs coming out at a rapid rate, the production was able to begin shooting without a finished script, by animating to the songs. "The first writer we had didn't work out," said Selick, "so Caroline Thompson came in and began to work with Tim and Danny. Danny was putting a lot of story into the songs, and then Caroline came in and put it all together. Meanwhile, Joe Ranft, the storyboard supervisor, and I worked out a lot of the scenes with artist Mike Cochnela and Jorgen Klubien and drew a lot of the storyboards, and we'd go back and



"I finished all the songs in about six weeks," said Elfman. "It was easier than expected because Tim and I are so in sync."



Danny Elfman, Tim Burton's music man, composed the film's songs and score and gave singing voice to lead Jack Skellington, like Burton, a fan of Halloween.

forth with them to Caroline. We'd do a scene writing rough dialogue, send it to her, and she'd write polished dialogue for it. Then we'd plug it into the script. We had some great concept artists like Barry Jackson, whose images were incorporated into the story. That's how we got the idea for the evil scientist, and the Mayor of Halloweentown."

The Mayor has a head that can spin around, making him a two-faced politician. Among the puppets he is unique since his mouth and eyes are replaceable, rather than his entire head. The evil scientist has a skull that flips open, so he can scratch his brain when he needs to stimulate his thinking. "We were basically doing second and third drafts of the script with our storyboard department," said Selick. "That added a lot of nuance and a final shaping to the story."

With only the songs ready for animation, a final go-ahead was needed from Disney to begin building the sets and puppets. "They gave us a sort of weak green-light," revealed Selick. "I'm sure they would

have preferred to have the finished script in their hands, but Jeffrey Katzenberg loved the story, the songs were great, and not long after we started, the finished script came in. They could have still pulled out, but they took a major leap of faith."

With over two years scheduled to complete the time-consuming frame-by-frame animation, a vacant studio in San Francisco was selected to house the production. "It seemed like San Francisco was the best place to do it," joked Burton, "so Henry wouldn't have to commute to L.A. Actually, all these animators lived up here and Henry knew everyone here, so it just seemed to make more sense."

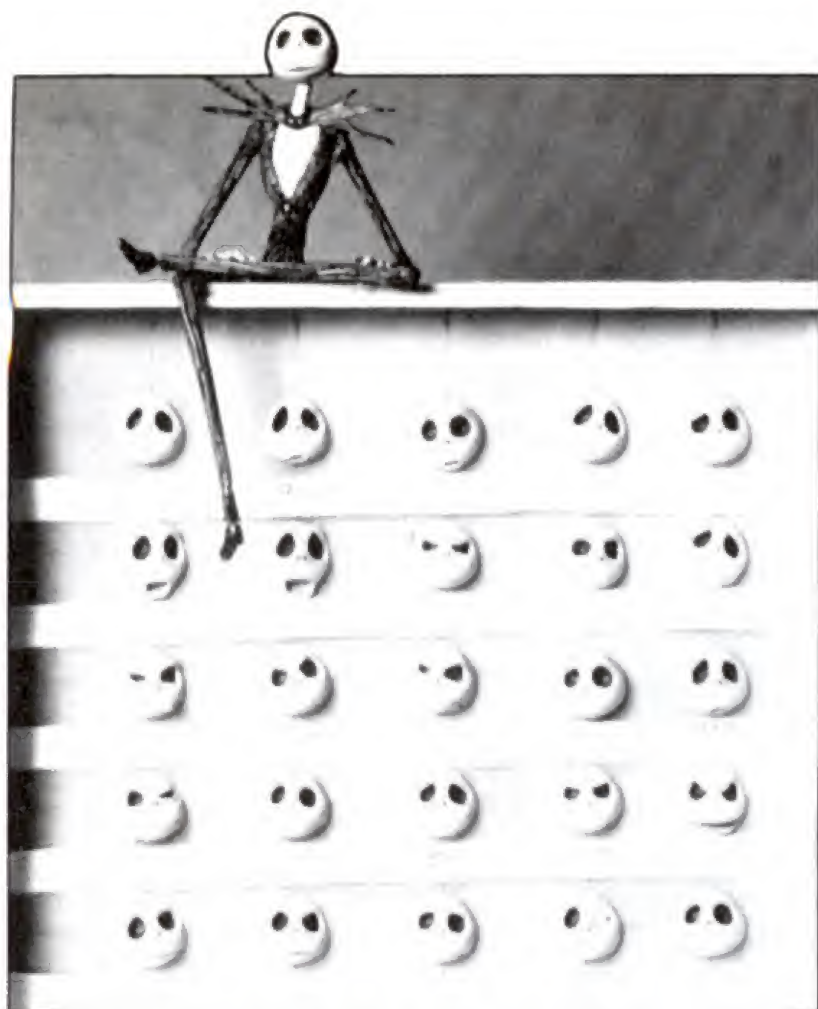
It was also a way of keeping studio executives away from the set. With only 40 to 70 seconds of film finished in a week's time, it isn't hard to imagine one or two bad shots causing panic in the executive suites. "This is the first full-length stop-motion film Disney has ever done," explained Selick. "The process isn't what they're used to, so I think there would have been too many

scary moments if they had been able to be here every day."

With many characters who need to speak and move their mouths to pre-recorded songs and dialogue, it was decided to use replacement animation. This technique was first developed in Europe by George Pal and others, and brought to America when Pal came to Paramount and began producing his Puppatoon short subjects in the early '40s. Ray Harryhausen, who animated several Puppatoons for Pal explained the process. "Every move in stop-motion would be pre-drawn, and for each frame of film you'd have a new head with a slightly different mouth position." For the Puppatoons, Pal would usually have over 100 different heads made. On NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS the character of Jack alone, required over 700 separate heads, each one replaced in succession for every new frame of film shot by the animator. The heads were all hand sculpted at the studio's puppet fabrication department, under the supervision of John Reed and Bonita DeCarlo.

To predetermine which heads would be used for a shot, all the songs and dialogue were pre-recorded. Then the soundtrack was broken down frame by frame. The heads were digitized and entered into the computer. Sync reader Dan Mason matched the various mouth positions phonetically to the dialogue indicating for the animator which heads he would need, before the shot even began filming.

In recruiting his technical crew, Selick used many of the people who worked with him at Colossal Pictures, or had worked with Phil Tippett on ROBOCOP 2. For director of photography, Selick chose Pete Kozachik, who worked as camera operator on THE ABYSS, and ROBOCOP 2 and 3, as well as several of Selick's short films. Tom St. Amand came onboard to design all the initial armatures, before leaving the project to join Phil Tippett on the stop-motion animatics for JURASSIC PARK. St. Amand returned at the end of the production to animate



The puppet of Jack Skellington (above) sits atop a box of a few of the more than 700 replacement heads used to make the character talk, sing and emote. The animation technique was developed by George Pal for his celebrated Puppetoons.



Sync reader Dan Mason (above) uses a computer to select a puppet head for each frame. Below: Jack's costar, Sally, posed with a selection of her replacement heads and eyelashes, sculpting supervised by John Reed and Bonita DeCarlo.

some additional shots. Eric Leighton, who provided much of the animation in *ROBOCOP 2* was hired as animation supervisor. He oversaw the work of the 15 animators needed to create the film's (approximately) 850 shots. For the film's all important visual look, Selick imported Australian art director Deane Taylor, who had previously worked mostly on cartoons.

Setting up shop began in the summer of 1991, with actual animation on the songs beginning in October. Pre-production involved working out everything to be shot in storyboards, and then filming the boards, editing them together with temp tracks of music and dialogue, and breaking down the various shots, so everyone involved would know what was needed. "It's all planned out like a military campaign," said Selick. "We have a very good scheduling department, and very talented supervisors for the props, puppets, sets, and so forth."

Due to the rigors of stop-motion work, everything had to be carefully regimented and controlled to make each scene work. There isn't the luxury of doing multiple takes, or different angles, that are customary with live-action. One 17-second shot on screen means minutely moving each of the characters in a given scene over 400 times

between camera exposures. Since a single shot could easily take over five days to complete, it would be terribly frustrating to see it afterwards and find some technical or performance flaw. "Our goal is to go for the final take in the first take," stated Selick. "We have an incredibly low shooting ratio, something like 1.2 to 1. We shoot only one angle for every shot and so far it's worked 95% of the time."

NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS promises to contain some of the most elaborate and consistently rich camerawork ever done with stop-motion. "There's a pretty long tradition of having a locked-down camera, before motion-control came in," said Selick. "The camerawork and lighting for this film is really unprecedented. It's been there before in Phil Tippett's work, but never on this large of a scale. We have incredible motion-control rigs that can do anything. One of them, the Luxo Sr., has a giant arm that stretches out 16 feet. Another can go through narrow openings. The Screamer, named because of the noise it makes, is a tiny 35mm camera that can fly like a bird with its motions. We try to cast the various rigs according to each shot. Pete Kozachik programs them, and sets the tone for creating the really beautiful organic movement in



the camerawork."

One such shot occurs when Jack is flying through the sky on his sleigh, and is suddenly shot down by cannons. He lands in the arms of an angel statue, in a graveyard in the real world, as the camera goes around him in spirals. "We have about 12 shots that are constantly going around him," explained animation supervisor Eric Leighton. "We never go all the way around though. We only go about 180 degrees before we get to the end of the track and have to cut. You get the feeling of going 360 degrees, but it isn't one continuous shot."

Initially, it was thought that the ability to do camera moves

would be limited by the budget. "We thought we'd just have some pans and tilts," revealed Kozachik. "Then it became apparent we needed to do some flying camera shots. We were dealing with full sets, so we weren't going to be doing traditional motion-control, where your elements are shot in front of a blue screen. We really needed to get into the sets. So I thought it would be nice to have a rig that could go places and reach out, and maybe have a six-foot reach. I told Henry, and he got excited and said, 'Yes, but let's make it with a 16-foot reach.' So we went ahead and built it, and it's really big and scary. It's not real user friendly. It's got chains and counter-

weights, and it's very hard to program."

Leighton dubbed it the Luxo Sr., as a homage to the short computer animated film LUXO JR., about a desk lamp that has jointed arms and moves around in a way similar to the camera rig. "The Luxo Sr. is just a floating camera in space," said Leighton. "There's nothing underneath it, it's all rigged from above, so it's very set friendly." It was used for the opening shot of the film, as the camera tracks through the graveyard, stopping at tombstones where ghosts and monsters come up and sing the opening song, "This Is Halloween."

"It's a pretty monumental shot," said Kozachik. "It's Halloween night, and the shot is a very long take we did that lasts about 25 or 30 seconds. All the shadows and the monsters were done with traditional cartoon effects animation."

Almost all of the cameras used for the animation were old Mitchells, inexpensively obtained as used equipment, with very steady pin registration, which makes them ideal for stop-motion work. VistaVision cameras were not considered, due to their higher cost, and also due to the low number of optical effects the film required.

"Initially we planned on only 20 optical shots," said Kozachik, "and we weren't even sure we could afford those. Then things expanded and we've ended up with about 100 opticals. A lot of those are just fixes, where a camera got bumped, or a light went out. Most of our effects are being done in-camera, which is a pleasure for me, because it goes through fewer hands, and since it's on the original negative, I don't have to follow-up on it later."

In the past, most stop-motion films have been done with only two or three animators, or in Ray Harryhausen's case only one. This allowed for a consistency of movement. For NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS, there was too much work to be done by only two or three people, and in the end 15 different animators worked on the film. The challenge was to



"We tried to make Jack's long skeleton moves more elegant," said Selick, "like Fred Astaire, not a scary monster."



Sally, Jack's Halloweentown girlfriend, another stitched-together character in the tradition of Burton's EDWARD SCISSORHANDS and FRANKENWEENIE.

maintain a continuity between animators, doing different shots with the same characters.

"Jack is in so much of the film, that every animator we have has done some work with him," confided Selick. "Just the extremeness of Jack's design helps in maintaining a consistency. He's a long thin skeleton and that design demands he move in a certain way. Eric Leighton worked very hard to establish what the standard walk cycle would be for Jack. How many frames he'd move, how he'd run and so-forth. We tried to make his moves more elegant, like Fred Astaire, rather than a scary monster."

During pre-production, the animators actually looked at footage of dancers like Tommy Tune and Ray Bolger, to get a feel for Jack's movements. "We started out with a few animators," said Selick, "and it's grown from that. A character is established, then a new animator studies what's been done, so there's a natural progression. We try to cast each animator according to the complexity of the shot, and the type of acting the puppet will have to do in a

scene."

Some animators expressed a preference for the characters they'd like to work with, "Some liked delicate figures like Jack," said Leighton, "while others found a big armature, like Oogie Boogie, more to their liking. Paul Berry and Tim Hittle were the main animators on Jack, because they had an affinity for him. Ideally, on a lead character we only have one of two main animators. That allows them to keep refining their style, as well as keeping the character in continuity. Oogie Boogie was done mainly by Trey Thomas, Owen Klatt and myself."

Oogie is a horrific character, who is a big bag of ooze, slime and bugs. He has a snake tongue, and spits out bugs when he laughs. In one scene, as he torments Santa Claus, his head opens and a spider comes down and dangles in front of his face. "I liked Oogie, but he was a real bear to move around," exclaimed Leighton. "Moving him around meant I'd have to climb up on top of the set, squat on top of him, grab him from underneath and pull with my

knees to move him. It was a drag, because I'd have to wipe the sweat off the set, so it wouldn't pixilate!"

For the character of Sally, Mike Belzer and Trey Thomas were the lead animators. The Evil Scientist was animated mainly by Belzer. Additional characters who populate Halloweentown included a corpse mom, dad and kid, harlequin demons, mummies, werewolves, witches, warlocks, a cyclops and of course, vampires. Animators who helped on these characters, included Angie Glocka, Anthony Scott, Justin Kohn, and Loyd Price.

Since the art of the stop-motion animator demands extreme concentration, several technical advances have been employed on this production to make their work more stress free. "One of the worst things that can happen to you, is that in the middle of a shot your puppet breaks," explained Selick. "We have some intricately designed characters, like Jack and Sally, with incredibly skinny ankles and legs. Oogie Boogie is a giant armature, as big as they get, and the Mayor of Halloweentown has a lot of rubber on him to push around. That leads to a fair amount of breakage. Out of the 14 shots a week we'd do, one or two of the main puppets would break. It used to be, when that happened you either had to start over again, or you did a quick insert shot.

"Now we have these video frame grabbers, so that every time we shoot, we grab the frame and store it digitally. It's very accurate but it can only store two frames at a time. Then if a puppet breaks during a shot we can come back with a new puppet, line it up and flip between the live shot and the grabbed frame [before the puppet broke]. Once you've lined up the shot perfectly, you can keep on going and no one will notice the difference. This saves the animator the anguish they'd feel, thinking the puppet might break. Without the frame grabbers they'd tend to be more cautious and the acting would not be as good. Now they can really manhandle the puppets, make them go through their paces, and if it breaks we can fix it."



HENRY SELICK, PUPPET DIRECTOR

To realize his vision, Tim Burton chose a fellow Disney emigré.

By Lawrence French

Henry Selick, the director of *NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS*, cited Ray Harryhausen's *7TH VOYAGE OF SINBAD*, *MIGHTY JOE YOUNG*, and the film's of German animator Lotte Reiniger as early influences. "I never really thought about getting into animation until much later, when I was about 20," said Selick.

Growing up in New Jersey, Selick began drawing at an early age, and eventually went to Cal Arts where he studied animation. He met Tim Burton in 1979 when they were both at Disney working on *THE FOX AND THE HOUND*. "We had different ways of looking at things than most of the Disney crowd," he said. "We liked Marc Chagall paintings."

While still working at Disney, Selick worked on a short experimental film called *SEEPAGE*, with a grant from the AFI, featuring life-size stop-motion figures by a pool, a combination of cartoon animation and cut-out figures.

Selick moved to San Francisco and directed TV commercials and a short film, *SLOW BOB IN THE LOWER DIMENSIONS*, intended as the first episode of a six-part series for MTV. Its bizarre surrealistic style, along with a cryptic score provided by The Residents, gave it more the feel of European avant-garde animation than a Disney musical project. Rick Heinrichs, Burton's visual consultant, offered Selick the directing job on *NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS*, when Disney reviewed the project Burton first conceived when he and Selick were animators there.

Selick supervised eight different camera crews shooting

simultaneously. "Working on the whole movie at once was extremely demanding," said Selick. "I start the day looking at dailies, 15 or 16 different shots in different stages of development. Everyone makes comments on them, how things look, what needs to be done different, changes in lighting and so-forth. Then I get out on the sets, deal with any emergencies that might come up, look through the camera, block out scenes and meet with department heads. My time is gone real fast. It's kind of like bringing up the whole painting at once.

"We don't get to do coverage. That means we have to shoot exact jigsaw pieces and fit them all together. I only get five extra frames at the head and tail of every shot!"

Selick didn't have the time to do any hands-on animation himself. "I got involved with posing the puppets," he said. Selick suggests poses by making sketches, but doesn't actually break-in the puppets, the way Phil Tippett does before a show. "Phil is a more accomplished stop-motion animator than I am," admitted Selick.

Selick's surreal MTV short *SLOW BOB IN THE LOWER DIMENSION* (1990).



Selick on the *Halloweentown* set at Disney's San Francisco puppet studio. Selick was a fellow Disney animator when Burton conceived the idea.

"I'm more of an all-around animator. Give me any material and I can make it wiggle."

After two years on such an enormous project, Selick's spirit and energy was still high, just months before release. "It's been nothing but fun solving the film's technical problems," he commented. "It's a grueling day-in, day-out schedule, but creative difficulties were never huge. I've been in tune with Tim [Burton], [composer] Danny [Elfman] and [writer] Caroline [Thompson] right from the start. I've never had any problems with Disney, so it's just been striving for perfection that is the difficult part. As each finished shot comes in, that's what helps keep me going. Just the pleasure of seeing these beautifully executed sequences."

Selick is optimistic about the future of stop motion and feels now is the best time to be involved in animation in general. "Anything that people are doing, whether it's clay, computer, cartoons or stop motion is getting out there," he said, "and that hasn't happened in the past. Stop motion hasn't been given the chance to be done well in features. It's rarely been attached to a good story. What I'm hoping for now is that we'll be able to carve a niche for stop motion that will grow by maintaining higher standards and doing better projects." □



PUPPET CAMERAWORK

Cinematographer Pete Kozachik on motion control.

By Lawrence French

For the photography of a live-action motion picture, camera movement and lighting are elements that can be fairly routine. If you want to add wind or water to a shot, all you need to do is get a fan or a hose. However, when you're shooting an entire picture on miniature sets, in conjunction with stop-motion animation, these elements become much more difficult to accomplish. For Pete Kozachik, the director of photography on NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS, it's been a challenge to obtain these elements,



Oogie Boogie summons forth blades to stir his steaming cauldron of snake and spider brew before lowering the kidnapped Santa Claus into the vat for flavoring.

Tippett on HONEY, I SHRUNK THE KIDS, and met Henry Selick at Colossal Pictures while working on the Pillsbury Doughboy commercials. While Kozachik was working at Phil Tippett's studio on ROBOCOP 3, Selick was there shooting tests for NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS. Shortly afterwards, Selick offered Kozachik the opportunity to become the director of photography. "Naturally, Tim Burton wanted to approve the cameraman," said Kozachik, "so when he saw the work I had done on Henry's short film, SLOW BOB IN THE LOWER DIMENSIONS,

that helped. There was a sufficiently weirdo, Eastern European type of animation look to it. Tim knew he wasn't going to get a Christmas special type of guy. Actually, at first I was a little reluctant to come aboard, because Phil was beginning JURASSIC PARK, but now I'm glad I did, since JURASSIC PARK turned into computer graphics. We're all hoping this show will be a means for keeping traditional stop motion alive."

Kozachik began his work on NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS by helping to design four custom-built motion-control rigs. He first got the idea of having a rig that could reach out over the sets while visiting an assembly-line of real industrial robots, to prepare for ROBOCOP 2. "The assembly-line robots had jointed shoulders, elbows and wrists," explained Kozachik, "so they could reach out and go places. That's how we came to build our primary rig, the Luxo Senior."

without compromising the integrity of the cinematography.

"All my professional life I've been a stop-motion apologist," said Kozachik. "It's so difficult just to get the puppets to move, that often lighting is done just for convenience, rather than effect. You see this on Christmas specials. They lack depth and storytelling ways and means. Everything live-action films take for granted is a problem, and that's what we wanted to overcome on this film."

As a consequence, NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS will offer a wide scope of intricate lighting and camera effects. "About three-fourths of the shots have moving camerawork," estimated Kozachik. "Lighting is designed for its dramatics and storytelling effect, rather than just trying to make the puppets show up. In this show you have characters in shadows, so you don't see them completely, but you know they're there. We have a lot of camera angles that

are difficult to animate from, because we used a short focal length lens, which means the animators would have to reach around the camera to get to the puppets."

In short, Kozachik feels NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS will be a much more sophisticated undertaking than has ever been previously attempted. "It has to work for an older audience," he said. "It shouldn't be like you're watching a kid's show. For today's audiences, it wouldn't be enough. We didn't want to have to limit our audience, just because we couldn't do certain things."

Kozachik began experimenting with stop motion in his garage, while growing up in Michigan and Arizona. Soon he was working on animated commercials for Coast Productions (formerly Cascade) in Los Angeles, and then became a camera operator for such ILM effects shows as INNERSPACE and WILLOW. He worked for Phil

Cinematographer Pete Kozachik, filming a real-world cemetery with the Luxo Sr. motion-control rig.





A child stares in horror of Christmas Eve as Jack's Halloweentown idea of a present eats his Christmas tree.

Kozachik also was able to borrow a more traditional motion-control rig from Phil Tippett. "That was easier to program than the Luxo Senior, and was a favorite among the crews," said Kozachik. "It helped save our butt for a while, so we called it the butt-saver!" Kozachik would then attempt to cast each rig, according to the needs of the various shots. "The crews would sometimes be fighting to get the two or three top rigs," added Kozachik.

Kozachik supervised lighting the sets, and the overall look of the shots, but rarely had a chance to start a shot himself. "I had to stand back," he said, "and let the operator and his assistant do the hands-on work, otherwise we'd never get done. I told the crews part of our job is to make nice images, and the

other part is to create an environment for the animators to work in. It needed to be a safe, comfortable place for them. Sometimes, we seemed to have gone out of our way to create torture environments for them!"

Kozachik and Selick wanted to do effects in-camera. After animation was completed, the footage was rewound and effects, such as fire or steam were projected into the scene. "Animator Paul Berry had a shot with a torch," said Kozachik, "where one character passes it off to another. We projected the flame element into the scene on a little white card, above the torch. Paul had to put the card over the torch, and remember to remove it after each frame." Such shots were something of a risk, given that a bad double-ex-

posure could easily ruin what had taken an animator over a week to shoot. Only two shots according to Kozachik, had to be redone, due to improper double-exposure.

Opticals have been used for scenes with Jack's orange-nosed ghost-dog, Zero. He floats along in the air, following behind Jack, and a beam-splitter was used to put him in the shots. Digital composites and repairs are also being done, with a new Disney program called the C.A.P.S. System. It was developed to assist in the ink and painting work of cartoon features, adapted with new programming.

To obtain the optimum depth of field in the photography was a task easily accomplished, given that any exposure time needed was possible. "Although after about 20 seconds the animators would protest," revealed Kozachik. "We tried to give the film a daytime and a nighttime look. There's a shallow depth of field at night, and more during the day."

Kozachik credited his crews for making things work smoothly, especially with 22 different camera set-ups going on at once. "We're all talking the same language," he said. "The crews are very meticulous and are all trying to work on the same movie, not 22 different ones. That's made it nothing but a pleasure." □

The frame grabbers also help smooth out the animation, so a more fluid look can be accomplished. Animator Owen Klatt explained, "that by flipping between the two stored frames and the one live frame, you can see a little bit of the animation. It gives you some sense of going in the right direction. You also might have forgotten to move something entirely, and by looking at the stored frames we can correct it."

The down side of frame grabbers is that it can easily become a crutch and slow down the animation. Phil Tippett, for instance has yet to embrace them. "It's a strange tool," admitted Leighton, "because instead of doing everything instinctively, you could start double checking yourself. You might think 'maybe I could change this,' or 'I've gone too far, I'll go back.' So you have to use it appropriately, as a tool and not as a crutch. Our idea when we started this show was to have cleaner overall animation, simply so people could sit through it for 80 minutes without getting a headache from strobiness. That meant we had to use the frame grabbers, in order to get smoother animation."

Another innovation is the use of light alarms on the set. With miniature sets lit by up to 50 different lights, you could easily miss a light going out, then see the shot projected a

Cameraman Pat Sweeny uses the motion control "butt saver" to film the Mayor of Halloweentown, greeting Jack, back from Christmastown on a snowmobile.



Camera operator Eric Swenson (l) and Greg Olsson, filming the real world for Jack's Christmas flight.



PUPPETEERS AS ACTORS

Animator Eric Leighton on casting puppeteers.

By Lawrence French

Like many of the crew involved on NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS, animator Eric Leighton worked with director Henry Selick at San Francisco's Colossal Pictures, animating dancing Ritz crackers and the Pillsbury Doughboy. Leighton was the first animator hired on the film. "When we started out, it was just me and Henry, at his little space for two months," remembered Leighton. "Then we rented space over at Phil Tippett's studio [for test shots]. Trey Thomas, Mike Belzer and Tim Hittle followed me on the show, plus Owen Klatte and Angie Glocka. So we

had five animators to start out with."

With the massive amount of stop-motion work needed, it soon became apparent that additional animators would have to be recruited. "We went on an all-out search," revealed Leighton. "We advertised in trade papers, animation journals, even the *London Guardian*. We got over 200 reels in response. We found Kim Blanchette over at Phil's place, where he was doing animatics on JURASSIC PARK. Justin Kohn I knew from ROBOCOP 2, so we brought him up from L.A. Joel Fletcher was also an L.A. import." From London came Lloyd Price and Paul Berry, whose short film, THE SANDMAN was nominated for an Academy Award this year. Rounding out the staff were



Lock, Shock and Barrel, Halloweentown's mischievous trick-or-treaters, are sent to Christmastown to kidnap Santa Claus. Below: The puppets unmasked.

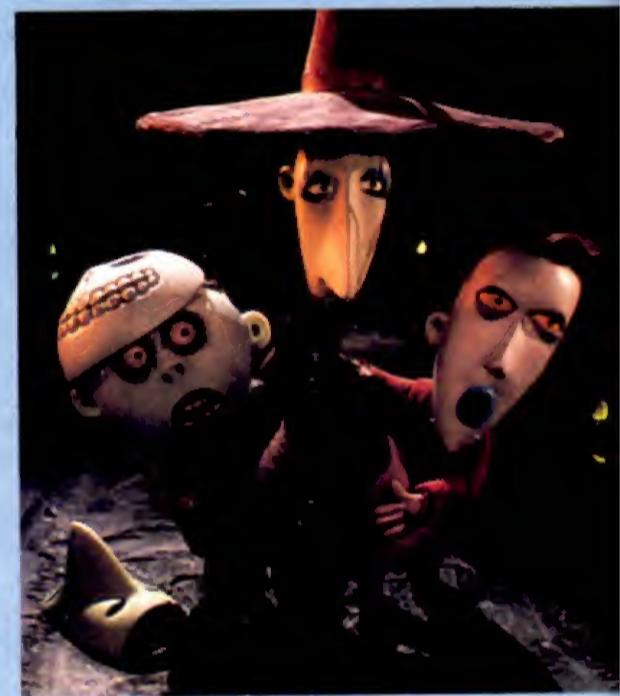
Harry Walton, Tom St. Amand, Rich Zimmerman and Steve Buckley.

Veteran stop-motion experts such as Doug Beswick and Jim Danforth were not approached, possibly due to their expense, or, as Leighton said, "because they have their own companies, and it seemed a little funny to pull them out of their own businesses to work for the competition." Jon Berg did some initial work in puppet fabrication, but was not involved in any of the animation.

As animation supervisor, it was Leighton's job to help cast the animators to the various shots, and establish many of the primary motions for the characters. During the second half of the schedule, he returned to hands-on animating, "because he was too good not to use," said director Selick.

"Lots of shots on this show are not your typically designed stop-motion set-ups," said Leighton. "Usually, you'll have the character's feet just out of frame, or a matte line, that will help you with access to the puppets. On this show it's more about design and images, so we just let the animator climb up on the set and suffer."

One of Leighton's most complicated shots occurred near the end of the film, as Oogie Boogie taunts his captives, Santa Claus and Sally. Oogie has prepared a steaming cauldron of snake and spider stew, complete with spinning blades stirring underneath it to better mix the



ingredients. His plan is to lower Santa into the vat to provide some additional flavoring.

"We shot that all in-camera," said Leighton. "It's nice to be able to produce the whole shot yourself, without having to rely on someone else in optical to support you. Figuring out how to do these shots can be hard work, so we take a certain amount of pride in doing it ourselves."

Using a motion-control system for multiple passes, dry ice was dumped under the soup for the first pass, while four grips with air hoses pumped bubbles through the stew to give it the effect of boiling.

"Then we rewound the film, and double exposed our stop-motion pass, on top of our latent image," said Leighton. "In general, most of our fire, water and smoke effects were done as live action, which we shot beforehand. Then they were either projected into the scene, or we



Leighton animates Oogie Boogie on the ultraviolet casino gameshow set. Inset: Paul Berry films a shot of Santa tortured on the device.



just burned them in."

For one scene with Jack dancing, fire was required to interact with him. "There was no way we could get a live-action element to match on the same negative," said Leighton. "So in a case like that, we would rotoscope the fire in with effects animation."

For a scene involving Jack grabbing a snowflake out of the air, Mike Belzer actually animated the snowflake. "We wanted it to look like Jack's really grabbing it," explained Leighton. "That meant we had to shoot it right on the set. Although we were able to animate 20 or so leaves, we never tried to animate thousands of snowflakes. That's the point when we give up on our pride."

Although some footage of dancers was looked at, no specific style of stop motion was used as a guide. Most of the animators were familiar with eastern European animators, such as Karel Zeman, but it wasn't a style they were attempting to emulate. "[Visual consultant] Rich Heinrichs brought out some footage of the Russian animator, Wladyslaw Starewicz," admitted Leighton, "and that stuff was amazing. He'd have a shot where 30 leaves are blowing around, then they come together and form a character who walks off."

Leighton said he was turned on to animation by THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL TOURNEE OF ANIMATION, a compilation of shorts he saw at the age of ten. "I thought they were magic," he said. "I couldn't believe you could make inanimate objects move and breathe." □

The Oogle Boogie puppet and jointed armature built by Tom St. Amand, a large puppet, difficult to animate.



"In the end, the animator has to go out on stage alone with the puppet," said Selick, "and breathe life into the character."



Cinematographer Pete Kozachik takes a light meter reading on the real world street set for an establishing shot, as Jack flies Santa's Christmas route.

week later and find a shift in the lighting. "To correct that we designed and built these light alarms," said Selick. "They're set to the voltage of each lamp, and if a light fails the alarm will go off. That's something animators haven't had in the past."

To obtain the best possible performances from the puppets, Selick went through an elaborate three-stage rehearsal process. "First, the lighting crew gets on the set," explained Selick, "and we do rough poses so the puppets can be lit. Then the animator comes in and we talk about the action. There's the storyboards of the scene which indicate the basic essence of the performance, but it comes down to acting out the performance with the animator. If it's Eric Leighton or Paul Berry, they can act it out in front of me, because they're very good at physically acting. Other animators aren't as good with their bodies, but are more eloquent with the puppets. In that case we'll go straight to the puppets, and we can adjust it from there. For example, animator Joel Fletcher might need to make Jack look prouder, so I get out

there and crank his back and shoulders around till he looks prouder." In this way, Selick directed the animators' movements, just as if they were actors in a live-action film.

The next day the animator goes through pop-throughs, hitting a dozen different poses with the key puppets, going five or ten frames per pose. Lighting is further refined, and the sets can be touched-up. That leads to the final run-through. By that point, all the key timing and poses are correct. These tests are filmed, and reviewed at the beginning of the next day, by Selick, Deane Taylor, Pete Kozachik and the animator who is doing the shot. At this stage, the adjustments and performances are reviewed, until everyone is satisfied, and then the shot is ready for a final take.

"In the end, the animator goes out on the stage alone," said Selick, "with just the camera, the puppets and the sets, and has to breathe life into the characters. We have really extraordinary animators, who are our equivalent Jack Nicholsons."

During the three-stage re-

hearsal process it might become apparent that a shot isn't working. "In that case we'll throw it out," said Selick. "I might want it to be more elaborate or subtle, or we'll change the camera angle until everything is right. Sometimes it's not, and you take a big gamble and go for the final. So far, of the 700 shots we've done, only about eight have needed to be redone because of a bad performance."

Among the film's more astounding shots will be Jack flying through the Christmas sky, on a sleigh drawn by three skeleton reindeer. "We had 32 wires for those shots," revealed Leighton. "Luckily it's all at night, so we've been able to hide most of them. There have been a couple of shots that went for digital wire removal, but if we were going to optically remove the wires, it would have been easier to just use a rod. That would really simplify the animation." For closer shots of the sleigh, it's supported by rods hidden from view, since you don't see the whole sleigh.

Another shot involved 60 people clapping, as Jack emerges from the fountain in Halloweentown's square. "That was a very time consuming shot," remembered Leighton. "We had three background animators, who would each move 20 people. It was just a matter of remembering which arm to move where, but it wasn't too difficult, because there wasn't a lot of elaborate movement involved in it." The finished shot lasts about five seconds, and the animators averaged only 24 frames per day.

To create the mood of windy weather in Halloweentown, the animators even decided to animate leaves flying through the air. Joel Fletcher animated a shot with lots of leaves flying past the town's clocktower. Harry Walton and Eric Leighton animated leaves for the film's opening shot, in the Halloweentown graveyard. "Those are very difficult shots," admitted Leighton. "We have three wires on each leaf, so hopefully you'll have enough support. For those shots we try to keep the breezes on the set to a mini-

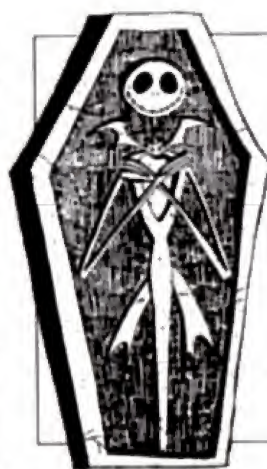


mum. The path the leaves follow was all plotted out ahead of time, so all we had to do was move each leaf one increment, then shoot it. Sometimes if they get blurred it's nicer. Harry would go in there and intentionally knock each leaf before the exposure, to get some nice blurring going on, and then we'd shoot them at long exposure times."

The end of the movie features about 12 shots with snow falling for the first time in Halloweentown. "We danced around those shots for a long time," admitted Kozachik. "At first we thought we wouldn't need it, it would look better if the snow had already fallen. Then we thought we'd use soap-flakes, or double-expose it. Finally, we ended up using computer graphics. Disney's CGI outfit had just come up with this way of moving groupings. It's a piece of software that allows you to move particles as if they're responding to the wind or any sort of stimuli. I wanted to use it for some of the leaves blowing, but we animated those instead. So we used it for our falling snow shots. It's about the only CGI in the show."

Although Tim Burton provided the basic story for NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS, as well as the design of the film, and most of the main characters, he has not exerted any dictatorial influence over the production. "Tim has got a very strong overview of the look and feel of the movie," explained Selick, "but he's really giving me a lot of room to make the film work. He sees the storyboards and the sequences, but I've only re-shot one scene in the movie for Tim. He said, 'You know what I like,' so I just try to keep in touch with Tim's sensibilities. But out there on the set, you just make your own decisions. So far it's worked out pretty well."

Burton agreed. "It's a real collaborative effort," he said. "Even in live-action there's no one person who does it all, and this has been a really good collaborative effort with Henry and Danny, and this incredible



“Production ground to a halt when Tim wanted Halloweentown changed,” said Selick. “He’d say, ‘I want it blacker, darker!’”



Animation supervisor Eric Leighton (l) and animator Mike Belzer with two of eight Oogie Boogie puppets, the closest thing to a villain in Burton's fairytale.

group of artists. I really feel good about it, because it's coming to such a beautiful fruition. It just seems like now is the time for it, and I feel really very lucky to have all these great people working on it."

During the two and a half years the film has been in production, Burton finished directing BATMAN RETURNS and will begin work on his next directorial project, ED WOOD, a black and white labor of love, based on the bizarre life of director Edward D. Wood, Jr. The film will concentrate on Wood's [Johnny Depp] friendship with Bela Lugosi [Martin Landau], and the making of such schlock classics as GLEN OR GLENDA, BRIDE OF THE MONSTER, and PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE. That, by necessity, limited Burton's presence on the set, although there was plenty of time to discuss areas he felt strongly about. "This has gone on so long," said Burton, "that it's like a live action movie in slow, slow-motion. But there's been time for us to communicate back and forth, because I haven't been directing for

awhile."

"When we started the film, the first scenes were in Christmastown," said Selick, "and Tim wasn't too concerned about that. But when we got to Halloweentown, production ground to a halt for about a week. Tim wanted things changed. He'd say, 'I want it blacker, darker!' He was very specific about what he wanted, and it was a learning process we had to go through." Director of photography Pete Kozachik and art director Deane Taylor went down to Burbank and met Burton on the stages of the BATMAN RETURNS set.

"Our first shots of Halloweentown were coming out looking like, as Tim said 'PINOCCHIO,'" recalled Kozachik. "I think Tim would have really preferred it if the whole movie was in black and white. Tim said, 'You guys look like you're on your way to making a well-produced Christmas special,' and that's not what he wanted. I came back and we took this set made of cute pieces of wood, with little knot holes and nails, and we spray painted the whole thing black.

Color was something to be used only when necessary."

Deane Taylor remembered Burton said the palette for Halloweentown was to be black, white and orange. "It wasn't a lot to work with," said Taylor, "so we just gave ourselves some additional tools. We introduced a sewer system through Halloweentown, with manholes and grates, and decided the sewage would be a toxic green. That way we could bring some green light into the mix. Then when the green light is thrown against these black backgrounds, it becomes a kind of brownish-orange. We also added street lights that were pumpkin designs, and the orange glow from those we used to accent the characters, because the colors in the characters are very bleached and corpse-like."

Rick Heinrichs, who was working with Burton on BATMAN RETURNS, came on as the visual consultant for NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS, and began working with Selick and Taylor. "Rick was very clear about what Tim wanted," said Taylor, "and he had some great advice about contrast, lighting, buildings, and shapes. He was a real guiding force, who gave us a general overview on the design."

"Rick would tell us to use much less color," said Selick. "He wanted to make it more German Expressionistic, like THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI. Then when Tim liked what he was seeing, he backed off for the rest of the movie."

Although Burton is clearly influenced by German Expressionism, he doesn't like to think about such influences consciously. "I'm not German or anything," he said. "I've only been to Germany a few times, and I've seen those films, but I think it just taps into that interior world of the mind."

Another influence is the work of artist Edward Gorey, whose macabre black and white drawings have graced many horror stories, as well as the stage design for the 1977 Broadway revival of DRACULA. "Everyone seems to want to avoid mentioning them for some reason, like you're a cheat



Animator Steve Buckley (l) films Jack's return to Halloweentown at the beginning of the film. Paul Berry (r) animates scarecrow Jack, video frame grabber at rear.

or a copycat," admitted Taylor. "I merely try to use references like I always have. I pick up a book, flip through it real quick, get a general first impression, and then hide it. Then you just draw on your impression and add your own input to it."

Burton agreed, adding, "We have all seen that stuff, but we choose not to talk about it. It's just there. We all grew up on Dr. Seuss, and Ray Harryhausen, but we never talked about it."

Danny Elfman thinks that's one of the keys to his successful collaboration with Burton. "We don't have to talk about things," he said. "Tim mentioned Dr. Seuss. When I started writing the lyrics, there was a strong Seussian element to them, yet we never talked about making it that way. It just happened to be what we were both thinking. That happens a lot when we work together."

Burton believes his ideas come from his subconscious mind. "I'd be sitting there talking on the phone," he revealed, "and start doing a drawing, and the image would just keep coming. Then I start thinking about it, trying to understand the psychology of it and the symbolism of it. I don't think about it, then draw it, but just let it come from the subconscious."

To help with the film's theatrical style of design and lighting, the crews had research screenings of films with exceptional black and white cinematography: *THE THIRD MAN* (shot by Robert Krasker), *NIGHT OF THE HUNTER* (shot by Stanley Cortez) and *BLACK SUNDAY* (shot by Mario Bava). "We checked those out," said Kozachik, "and made note of how cross-light was used, and how dark things were. They're full of darkness and shadows."

For the climax of the movie Jack attempts to save Santa Claus and Sally from the clutches of the wicked Oogie Boogie. Oogie's lair is designed a combination torture chamber

and a Las Vegas casino. A large spinning roulette wheel, with chaser lights, serves as the setting for "Oogie Boogie's Song." The song was conceived by Danny Elfman as a tribute to Max Fleischer's Betty Boop cartoons, where Cab Calloway would sing a song such as "St. James Infirmary." "When I wrote the song, I started thinking of dice as imagery," said Elfman. "Then Henry picked up on that and it bounced all around, until we ended up with this gambling and Vegas-type of setting."

That was really the only song that had a specific influence on Elfman. The others were all conceived as merely telling the story, with a sense of

timelessness. "I was trying to write something you could have heard now or 20 or 40 years ago," said Elfman. "Hopefully the songs will have a quality that makes it very hard to identify when and where they came from." That quality was something that was also maintained in the visual design of the film. "There's nothing past World War II in the settings or the props," stated Kozachik. "Everything is old, even in the real world. It's a classical look, that harks back to the old Universal horror days."

Elfman also provided the singing voice for Jack, a task he enjoyed greatly. "As I wrote the songs, I began demoing them," explained Elfman, "and then I became very attached to them. I finally reached a point where I felt no one else could do a better job singing Jack's songs. I felt a lot in common with Jack, and told Tim I'd kill him if he didn't let me sing them!"

Burton quickly agreed with Elfman's request and noted, "He's a darn good singer." Among the songs Elfman sings are "Jack's Lament," "Poor Jack" and "Jack's Obsession."

After working for over two years, director Selick and his staff of animators will no doubt be looking to take long vacations. "It's very demanding

A closeup of the puppet Santa showing detail, and Tom St. Amand's armature (l).



work, that can lead to a schizophrenic way of life," observed Selick. "It's sort of like working on oil rigs, very physical work and really intense. We try to keep it human, and if an animator is on a real long shot, we'll give them extra days off."

"There's usually only a few hospitalized at any moment," laughed Burton.

What helped maintain the crew's spirits over the long haul was the belief that what they're doing was truly a worthwhile project. Selick credited producer Kathleen Gavin, for maintaining people's focus and enthusiasm, while Elfman felt that everything clicked right from the start. "We all shared a common bond," he said. "We have influences from the same era and know most of the same movies. Tim's idol growing up was Vincent Price. Mine was Peter Lorre. So there was a feeling of doing something unique, that no one else had ever done before. There was a lot of fuel coming from that feeling."

For director Selick working with Tim Burton has been a very interesting relationship. "It's funny, some of the things Tim wanted," remembered Selick. "Sally, the ragdoll character, is fairly voluptuous, but Tim wanted her to have really small feet and hands. So Sally had a reasonably healthy sized body, coming down to ankles that were really thin. The armature makers said, 'We can't make this work. Those ankles won't hold her up. There's not enough surface area.' I said, 'Okay, let's put socks on her, and that will hide the fat ankles.' Tim agonized over this for days. Finally he said, 'Okay, you can have the socks, if you put stripes on them.' Tim really lives in the visual world. Sometimes he can't explain something, so he'll just do a sketch, and then I'll know what he's after."

Choosing the actors to voice the characters has given work to several alumni of Burton's movies. Sally's singing and speaking voice is provided by Catherine O'Hara (BEETLEJUICE), who also voices the witch, Shock. The Mayor of Halloweentown is spoken by



"High-end effects will go CGI," noted animator Eric Leighton, "but there's still going to be room for traditional stop motion."



With or without their ghoul, devil and witch masks, trick-or-treaters Lock, Shock and Barrel look pretty much the same, plotting to kidnap Santa Claus.

Glenn Shadix (BEETLEJUICE). Lock's vocals are handled by Paul Reubens (PEE WEE HERMAN), and the evil Scientist is the gravely voiced William Hickey (PRIZZI'S HONOR). For Jack, Chris Sarandon is the speaking voice, while Danny Elfman lends his talents for the singing chores. Elfman also speaks for Barrel.

"We worked hard to cast the right voices," remarked Selick. "We'd try to acclimatize the talent by showing them a lot of material on the film. I have a very clear idea about every spoken line, but I like to give the actors some room to breathe, and do it first. If I'm not getting what I want, I'll explain it exactly. Then you usually get a marvelous reading. Sometimes we've already animated the scene using a temp voice. In that case they'll have to match the track *exactly*."

With the film nearing completion Disney had test screenings to see how various audience segments would respond. "Kids have been really great," enthused Burton. "It's more of the parents freaking-out, because of the way it looks. It's

really pretty tame. It's like the Grinch in reverse. None of the characters are bad, they're just misguided. It's really about misguided passion, and I don't know why, but I really find that endearing. The characters really want to do something good, they really get into it and are trying so hard, but they just don't quite get it. Then it's misperceived by other people, and at the end it comes around to a self-realization, which is usually a good thing."

Noted Danny Elfman, "I think Disney has been very smart in allowing us to offer the more perverse side of what a musical can be. They didn't try to exert any influence at all, one way or the other." As far as the key 14 to 24 age group goes, Elfman thinks they will respond favorably. "The look of it is intriguing and different enough, that they'll be drawn to it, just because it's so wonderfully strange."

Burton on the other hand doesn't really know. "You never can tell," he said. "We don't have anything else we can base this on, so we just try to make a good movie and hope for the best."

While Disney may not have

exerted any undue influence on the film, they have decided to release it as a Touchstone Picture rather than have it go out as a family-oriented Disney title. The studio also decided to move up its release from November 5 into October, premiering the film at the New York Film Festival on October 9, and then platforming further openings to crescendo around Halloween.

The film's success or failure will probably determine the future viability of stop-motion animation. JURASSIC PARK's computer graphics have clearly wowed filmgoers across the nation, and may prove to be the death-knell for stop-motion. On the other hand, if NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS is a hit, then Disney and other companies may continue to invest the time and resources needed for the process.

"There's an inherent charm, as well as a certain reality that you can't get any other way," exclaimed Selick. "It's real puppets, bathed in real light, on real sets. I believe this will never be replaced, the same way Disney's cartoon animation will never be completely replaced. We want to use computers in every way to help us, but I don't want to put a guy in a costume and have sensors all over him doing a dance, and simultaneously on the screen you see Jack Skellington doing that. It can be done now, it's called motion capture, but it's just dead to me."

Eric Leighton agreed, saying "I think we'll have two different things happening. A lot of high-end effects and commercials will go into CGI, but there's still going to be room for traditional stop-motion. Most of the animators here prefer to get on the set, and get their hands dirty. I know I'd rather *not* be learning computer software, but be hands on in some way."

Ironically American stop-motion essentially began in San Francisco, in 1915, when Willis O'Brien animated two clay boxers on top of the Bank of America building. 78 years later, San Francisco may provide the setting for a re-birth of the process, or it's possible demise. Only time will tell. □



ANIMATION ART DIRECTION

*Deane Taylor designed
Burton's fantasy world.*

By Lawrence French

The varied and elaborate miniature settings for NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS required an art director whose style was fairly close to that of producer Tim Burton. With that in mind, director Henry Selick picked Deane Taylor, in consultation with Burton and his design advisor Rick Heinrichs. Taylor's background included TV cartoon design work for Hanna-Barbera

of the film. We were looking for a balance, simplicity and a great illustrative look."

Taylor met with Burton when he was in the midst of filming BATMAN RETURNS. "I was chasing him around the Warner Bros backlot," revealed Taylor. "A couple minutes in his trailer, a couple at the editing bench. He didn't labor over any one thing. He just broad stroked it."

Taylor's next step was to come up with variations to present to Selick for his input and approval. "You work out all of the elements in a given scene, and do a lot of rough drawings," said Taylor. "You can clarify certain points with the rough sketches and work out the logistics. We end up with ten roughs of a scene. You haven't put a lot of time into any of them, but you'll get a sense of whether it's working or not."

From the initial rough drawings, Taylor would pick two or three of the best, or most practical versions, and present them to Selick. "As a designer myself, I'll make lots of comments," said Selick. "I like to see everything, because I'm the guy who has to make things cohesive, so it will all be in keeping with the rest of the film."

One of the interesting problems was to balance the ornately gothic designs of Halloween-town with the more traditional look of the real world. "We didn't want to have one place overpower the other," ex-



Building the fantasy, puppet fabricator Elise Robertson puts the finishing touches on one of Halloween-town's favorites—the clown with the tear-away face.

plained Taylor. "Our initial thinking was to make the real world very simple and flat. Then Henry suggested we twist the houses isometrically, so they sort of slant towards you, like a collapsed box. Then we added pastel colors, which gave these simple designs a sort of weird look. That all came completely from Henry."

Taylor's approved designs were handed to Gregg Olsson to draft the sets and build quarter-scale models, used to help determine how accessible the sets would be for the animators. The sets were built with the idea to customize them for each specific camera angle. "You can only work the sets for so many shots before you start to see in and around them too much," explained Taylor. "We wanted to

avoid that, and at the same time build as economically as possible. To get a good shot of a building, sometimes I'd just draw it like you'd do for an animation layout, then we'd build it in half-relief."

Bo Henry built the sets, with Taylor adding textures and finishing touches. "I'd do little tweaks to the sets," said Taylor. "Either highlighting or darkening something away with a wash. I'd try to make the story points through art direction. There's a lot to look at and we have to be very well planned, so we can catch things before they're shot. We have quite a bit of time to catch things in our test shots, because we don't want to have to re-shoot something, unless it is absolutely necessary." □

Owen Klatte animates Oogie, taunting Santa on the casino set. Taylor's set designs sought to follow an aesthetic set by the sketches of producer Tim Burton.



Rendering the design for an Oogie torture device, Australian art director Deane Taylor at the board.

and Warner Bros.

Based on Burton's character designs and a few backgrounds, Taylor designed the sets that were needed. "I tried to make it as close to Tim's look as possible," said Taylor. "Henry wanted to simplify things to get story points through. He stripped out a lot, and from that process I got a very clear vision of how we should approach each part



MUTANT ACTION

Science fiction splatter boosted by Spain's Pedro Almodovar.

By Alan Jones

A wholefood millionaire's daughter is held for ransom on the macho mining planet of Axturias by a group of handicapped renegades known as ACCION MUTANTE (MUTANT ACTION). This unruly mob of militant outcasts, led by a disfigured ex-convict, are the lone voice of protest in the year 2012. Determined to destroy the body beautiful/designer society that shuns them, they're the disabled stars of an outrageous Spanish gore parody directed by newcomer Alex de la Iglesia.

Starring Antonio Resines, Frederique Feder, Alex Angulo and Fernando Guillen, ACCION MUTANTE is the first movie out of the El Deseo S.A. production stable *not* directed by Spain's *enfant terrible* Pedro Almodovar. But the MATADOR, WOMEN ON THE VERGE OF A NERVOUS BREAKDOWN, TIE ME UP, TIE ME DOWN, HIGH HEELS director did executive produce the ambitious science fiction satire with his brother, and El Deseo partner, Agustin. The Almodovar connection has focused an unpre-



Frederique Feder, menaced by a creature on board a spaceship of outcasts from mining planet Axturias.

cedented amount of global attention on the \$3-million futuristic spoof shooting the unknown Iglesia into the European media spotlight. WHAT HAVE I DONE TO DESERVE THIS? is the 28-year-old Bilbao native's personal favorite Almodovar movie. It's also a phrase that could describe his current state of mind as the camp follower freely admitted at the 1993 Avoriaz Fantasy Festival where

his tongue-in-*chic* fantasy was world premiered.

"Pedro was a friend of a friend and I simply gave him this script to look at which I'd written over a two-year period with Jorge Guerricaechevarria," said Iglesia, who pointed out he's no relation to Eloy de la Iglesia, director of the 1972 gore classic CANNIBAL MAN/THE APARTMENT ON THE 13TH FLOOR and the 1973 science fiction entry LA GOTA DE SANGRE PARA MORIR AMANDO. ("Although so many journalists assume we are, I'm considering lying about the connection in the future!" he laughed.) Iglesia sold the Almodovars on backing the film while Pedro was setting up HIGH HEELS. "He was quite busy," said Iglesia. "But I suddenly got a call from Agustin asking me to fly to Madrid for a meeting. He said they both liked the script and my 1990 short, MIRINDAS ASESINAS/THE MIRANDA KILLINGS, and with adjustments, they'd be prepared to produce it when they had the time. Four months later we gave Pedro a draft he loved and a year later, after painstaking



Almodovar produced, but did not direct the tongue-in-*chic* exercise.

preparation and drawing precise storyboards for the action sequences, we were on location in Saragossa, Southern Spain, for the desert planet scenes."

While admitting to having "great affection for GODZILLA, THE FLY, KING KONG, David Lynch, Luis Bunnell and the *Tin Tin* cartoons," Iglesia noted his greatest influence co-writing the script came from the comic *Hard Boiled* by Dave Gibbons. "*Hard Boiled* is very violent but also funny. I tried to include the same disturbing, abrasive satirical edge. The Spanish are ill at ease with comedy-tinged horror and I'm hoping ACCION MUTANTE will change their perception." Tele-

Tyro director Alex de la Iglesia, amid mutant wedding party extras.



SCIENCE FICTION GORE

“A wild, futuristic setting allows you more freedom to be crazy, anarchic and nasty,” said director Alex de la Iglesia. “It’s black comedy that’s over the top.”



MUTANT ACTION leader Ramon (Antonio Resines) abducts Feder at her designer wedding, and staples her mouth shut (r) aboard his rusty spaceship.

vision gameshows and commercials are what Iglesia considers real obscenities. He sends both up in the movie and the cod commercial for an hallucinogenic breakfast cereal always gets a great audience reaction. “I was told to be careful because some of the financial backing came from a Spanish TV company. But a wild futuristic setting allows you more freedom to be crazy, anarchic and nasty.”

And nasty ACCION MUTANTE often is. Kidnapped Feder has her mouth stapled shut and one razor blade torture scene is extreme even by Spanish classification standards. Continued Iglesia, “It’s black comedy and the horror is purposely over the

top. This is a movie, it’s not supposed to be serious or have any moral. I just want audiences to have a lot of fun watching it.” The gore makeups and special effects were by Hipolito Cantero, Olivier Gleyze, Yves Domenjoud, Jean-Baptiste Bonetto and Bernard-Andre Le Boette—names that will be familiar to admirers of last year’s cult sensation DELICATESSEN. “The film was a French co-production, said Iglesia. “I felt obliged to take some French technicians, and I chose the DELICATESSEN team because we seemed to understand each other. And they promised to deliver quality effects for as little money as possible!”

Most of the famous cast and crew, apart from French actress Feder and the effects band, were from Iglesia’s home region, the Basque country. But the on-screen revolutionary mayhem does not make any political statement about the current Separatist fight, “Except sub-conscious,” mused the director who appears as a robot priest in the movie. Neither does the tune used frequently during the opening reel. It’s the theme music from the cult TV program MISSION IMPOSSIBLE, which Iglesia “picked up the right to very cheaply.” Other riotously campy moments include the fashion victim wedding party

featuring favored Almodovar starlets, i.e. WOMEN ON THE VERGE’s Rosey de Palma, orchestrated to a new Spanish version of the John Fred and his Playboy Band pop standard “Judy in Disguise with Glasses.”

Naturally, such trash with flash is where Iglesia and Almodovar connected easily. Where they clashed bitterly was over the violence issue. “Pedro

respected him for that. There was much we didn’t agree on and I don’t ever want to be put in the same position again of having such a strong director as my producer. The worst it got was when Pedro exploded and said he’d wished he’d directed the movie himself! We were filming so quickly though, there wasn’t much time to let stuff like that sink in. The crew knew what I wanted and there were no sudden big ideas or improvisation.”

That’s all in the past now though with ACCION MUTANTE scoring good advance reviews both at home and abroad despite Iglesia’s pessimism. “I’m surprised so many people are on the same wave length with the same sick tastes as myself!” He laughed. But, as far as Iglesia is concerned, he’s simply continuing what he considers “a great Spanish horror tradition. “I love Juan Piquer Simon. And Jess Franco is a very mythical figure to me, although I’d never want to meet him. I’m sure he’d be a big disappointment.” One horror icon Iglesia did meet was fellow Bilbao citizen Paul

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doesn’t like visual violence, only the mental kind, and couldn’t understand why I wanted my movie quite so bloody or shocking,” said Iglesia. “It was a constant battle and throughout filming our relationship became quite tense. But he never once used his authority to pull rank and impose his opinion. I really

Disfigured ex-convict Ramon, tortured with vinegar on his wounds in the outrageous Spanish gore parody, a hit at this year’s Avoriaz Fantasy Festival.



Militant outcasts in the year 2012 terrorize a body beautiful society.

ROBERT ENGLUND'S

The Freddy Krueger star on his latest roles,

By Alan Jones

"It's not a horror film *per se*, rather it's more an erotic chiller," said actor Robert Englund about the movie he world premiered at Milan's "Dylan Dog Horror Fest 4." TOBE HOOPER'S NIGHTMARE (yes, that is the full title on the credits) is the fourth Cannon movie after LIFE-FORCE, INVADERS FROM MARS and THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE 2 to bear the POLTERGEIST director's name. It finds Eugenie (Zoe Trilling), in Alexandria to visit her archaeologist father (William Finley), brainwashed into joining a sex cult headed by lascivious Paul Chevalier, a descendent of the infamous Marquis De Sade. En-

Englund revealed Wes Craven's Elm Street VI will have a behind-the-scenes setting, making the films.



A dream sequence from TOBE HOOPER'S NIGHTMARE, Englund's latest foray into horror.

glund plays both parts as the movie cuts between the 18th-century De Sade being tortured in prison to Chevalier indulging his perversions in the modern day fleshpots of Egypt.

"I've been touting it as gore-spiced wretched excess in the Ken Russell mold with an added dash of Dario Argento," said Englund. "Originally it was conceived as a very violent, scary and sexy sadomasochistic DANGEROUS LIAISONS, set exclusively in the 18th century. By the time I got to the Israeli locations in Tel Aviv, it had all been changed to the 1920s. However, they were unable to find the antique cars or enough locations to help define the period. So the MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS look was axed too and producer Yoram Globus convinced me it would work in a contemporary milieu with all these decadent ex-patriots running around being sleazy in Alexandria."

Englund signed his NIGHTMARE contract with director Gerry O'Hara, who had begun the project. Explained Englund,

"Gerry was an English assistant director who had worked for Tony Richardson and had made a few Poe movies for Cannon. But when Anthony Perkins passed away, Gerry was called in to save another movie. I suggested Tobe fill in and he wanted to make his own hallucinogenic erotic fantasy so the script took yet another tack. Are you watching a young girl's erotic nightmares or is she truly in danger from a perverted sex

cult? Tobe wanted to blur the lines between reality and fantasy and that concept wound up on screen."

Any movie dealing with De Sade's exploits runs the risk of huge censorship problems worldwide. Englund and Hooper knew they had to be careful as a result. "The nastiest it gets is acid-in-the-eyeballs torture and climactic stuff with an eye-gouging implement," he said. "The sex is pretty much soft core grappling with a few handcuffs and symbolic snakes. Originally we had some narration because De Sade's writing is so pungent. But that, even today, was con-

sidered too cutting edge, vivid and scary. It seemed to make the movie far more dangerous in intent. We used passages from his short story 'Eugenie,' the reason for Zoe's character name. It was argued the teen audience wouldn't be interested in classic quotes. I didn't agree. I felt they would access it far better. I'm sure the movie lost something when the narration was dropped. I'm not certain audiences now understand the

Englund, to be reunited with series star Heather Langenkamp in WES CRAVEN'S NEW NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET, got Craven and New Line back together,



NEW "NIGHTMARES"

plus the scoop on Craven's next Elm Street.

parallels between Eugenie's fantasies and what's happening in her real world. She seems too much a willing accomplice rather than being dragged screaming into De Sade's hell."

While Englund is only too aware of the movie's faults, he did enjoy playing De Sade. "The foppish dandy side was enormous fun," said Englund. "I've often gone over the top in roles that didn't need it. Here it was a basic requirement! The jail scenes were horrible to play, though. The location was an old warehouse full of bats and rats. There was guano everywhere and the bats ruined take after take. Hygiene was completely absent and if you look closely you can see rat droppings all over me in certain tortures. But, given the miniscule budget, Tobe did an amazing job with production values. It was good to see him get back to his low-budget roots. There he was, up to his neck in filth, really enjoying being inventive again. Both of us have been spoiled by the Hollywood system to some degree. But there's a new energetic Tobe emerging from the post-SPONTANEOUS COMBUSTION period. He's less tense, has a new lady in his life and is raring to go."

In fact, Englund and Hooper will be working together again on Stephen King's *THE MANGLER*. Englund laughed, "It's funny to think I appeared in Tobe's second movie *EATEN ALIVE*. Do you remember my opening line? 'My name is Buck and I like to ****!' If it's not Wes Craven, it's Tobe Hooper, it seems. Tobe and I formed a company to secure the movie rights to *THE MANGLER* from King's *Nightshift* anthology. We begin shooting in Toronto this summer [1993]. It's a lean, little story about the Hadleigh-Watson Mangler, a 1920s, post-industrial revolu-

"I told [New Line's] Bob [Shaye] to ask the help of the man who started it, to make peace with Wes Craven. They made him an offer he couldn't refuse."



In *TOBE HOOPER'S NIGHTMARE*, a Cannon production shot in Israel, Englund plays the dual role of the Marquis De Sade and his present-day disciple. Noted Englund, "It's not a horror film per se, it's more of an erotic chiller." Inset: The masked torturer.



tion, steam-cleaning sheet presser. Not only does it clean sheets, it also folds them in quarters. Accidentally a bat gets into the warehouse, a young virgin girl (the last in America!) cuts her finger and bleeds into the machinery, and a little old lady drops her medication containing belladonna. These three elements make up an ancient curse causing the Mangler to develop vampiric tendencies. As it continues to injure the

workers, a strange pact is revealed to have taken place between the Devil and the rancid owner of the laundry, played by yours truly. He's a crippled Harry Truman type. I'm modeling my performance after Everett Sloane in Orson Welles' *THE LADY FROM SHANGHAI*."

Once that's in the can, Englund will start shooting the much anticipated, and, until now, top-secret *WES CRA-*

VEN'S NEW NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET. So much for *FREDDY'S DEAD!* Englund laughed, "But as *THE FINAL NIGHTMARE* did incredible business everywhere, I knew it wouldn't be long before New Line Cinema chairman Robert Shaye asked us to do another one. While I didn't want to look stupid after trotting around the globe with director Rachel Talalay emphatically saying 'Yes, this is definitely it' on the last promotional tour, when I bumped into Bob [Shaye] at a New Orleans convention I told him the only way to approach a possible *NIGHTMARE 7* was to ask the help of the man who started it. I told him to make peace with Wes Craven. And as luck would have it, Wes had been shopping another project to New Line, so they made him a package deal offer he couldn't refuse."

Englund said Craven has completed two-thirds of the script which an ecstatic New Line loves. "What's it about?"

Well, from what I can work out I'm back playing not only Freddy Kreuger but Robert Englund, the actor, as well. Heather Langenkamp returns as Nancy and also plays herself (Langenkamp starred in the original *NIGHTMARE* and *PART 3: DREAM WARRIORS*). She's the

victim of a stalker in a story that's very reality based and the manifestation of Freddy here comes from the participants who are about to start work on a new horror film with Wes Craven in 1984. Each of the past successive sequels cheated on the rules laid down by Wes in the original and it's important to bring Freddy back in a legitimate way that will explore new territory for all of us. What has

continued on page 60



Steven Spielberg launches the unfolding of a whole new communications revolution.

By Thomas Doherty

Suddenly and unaccountably confronted with the full-scale incarnation of the creatures whose study has been the obsession of his adult life, paleontologist Alan Grant (Sam Neill) gapes open-mouthed and stares wide-eyed. His knees buckle and he collapses backward in vertiginous disbelief, just short of a dead faint, and sits down on the ground, stunned beyond speech. Seated, movie audiences beholding the selfsame sight can better keep their balance, but when the denizens on screen march (not lumber) into the spectator's field of vision, our expressions are liable to mirror the good doctor's. JURASSIC PARK isn't "willing suspension of disbelief"—it's "seeing is believing."

It has become commonplace to marvel at Hollywood's effects legerdemain in the age of computer graphics and robotics, to watch in astonished delight as Stan Winston works his sorcery and the alchemists at Industrial Light and Magic cook up another potion. But the dinosaurs conjured for Matsushita-MCA's high-profile, \$60-million investment inspire a spellbound wonder akin to what audiences must have felt



Richard Attenborough as John Hammond, a visionary like Spielberg, out for the big thrill as much as the big bucks, wowing his audience with a ticket to ride.

listening to the first "talkies." The verisimilitude is documentary in detail and utterly convincing. To watch JURASSIC PARK is to witness the unfolding of a whole new communications revolution.

Of course the film's best example of seamless matching was the meeting of minds between Michael Crichton, author of the monstrously successful gene-splicing thriller, and Steven Spielberg, the designated park ranger. The screenplay by Crichton and David Koepp streamlines and softens Crichton's novel much the way the

film version of Peter Benchley's JAWS cut out extraneous ballast (the adultery subplot) and spared the likeable characters (Richard Dreyfuss's ichthyologist) from shark ingestion. Thus, the mathematician who discourses at length on chaos theory (played by the likeable Jeff Goldblum) and the bio-tech baron (played by the crusty Sir Richard Attenborough) are each spared from a nasty fate.

Malfunctioning equipment and human cupidity propel a bungy jump into Hollywood's version of the Museum of Natural History. As in JAWS,

Spielberg keeps back the main attractions (a pissed-off T. Rex and squad of vicious raptors) in order to milk the suspense. In the first big attack sequence, he ratches up the terror in textbook Hitchcock fashion—a trembling glass of water, animal roars from off-screen, and fearful looks in the shadows. Unlike JAWS, the director need not obstruct the spectator's line of sight or cut away from an obviously mechanical creation that will not bear close up and prolonged inspection. This is the revolution announced by JURASSIC PARK. Where the old creature features had to conceal their inadequacies, the new breed struts its stuff, full-on, full-view. Spectators are invited to behold the handiwork at their leisure, challenged to detect the fabrication. Get an eye-full, folks.

Though Spielberg's name is above the title, writer-director Crichton's label has, rightly, been stitched prominently on the designer genes of JURASSIC PARK. Crichton's special genius was to overcome the chronological hurdle that has tripped up generations of screenwriters face-to-face with dat ol' demon, evolution: the temporal incompatibility of dinosaurs and men. The prime



The Rex, is it live or is it CGI? Audiences can't tell the difference anymore.

SPIELBERG'S CGI LEGACY

“After the next leap forward might this cinematic milestone begin to look pallid and dated? Probably not. Like 2001, this is a film destined to escape fossilization.”

narrative task of the cinema *du* dinosaur—dino-kino?—is to generate a landscape where man and dinosaur could bump into each other socially. Crichton solved the problem with scientific ingenuity and novelistic originality. His brand of science fiction rejects the wild futurist scenario, the stuff of time machines, warp speeds, unlikely physics, and sketchy exposition. Instead, Crichton imaginatively expands on theoretically probable eventualities readily spied from the present. *Smithsonian* magazine recently did a piece on genetic cloning and averred that yes, Crichton's ingenious web spinning—in which dinosaur DNA is extracted from the blood of a mosquito preserved in amber—is actually within the realm of possibility. “Eureka!” Crichton must have exclaimed at his word processor—instant dino mix and in tune with new paleontological evidence (and fortuitously, with the mind-boggling advances in computer graphics and effects technology), the creatures are more bird-like, warm-blooded, fast and clever.

Alas, no cultural landmark and global phenomenon arrives without its gainsayers. The main controversy generated by the film concerned its suitability for the moppet trade and the cynicism of a PG-13 motion picture forbidding entry to children who are the prime targets of the ancillary marketing. Given the financial stakes, JURASSIC PARK had to come in below the R rating, smack at the center of the PG-13 zone, the category devised especially for Spielberg when INDIANA JONES AND THE TEMPLE OF DOOM stretched the limits of parental guidance. At the same time, the film had to pack a violent punch that would attract droves of bloodthirsty teenagers.

Although some science fiction fans might argue there's no sense having realistic dinosaurs around if you can't vividly depict their table manners with a tasty human morsel, the on-screen violence in JURASSIC PARK surely warrants the signpost “may be too intense for younger viewers” (or at least their concerned parents), espe-

cially the sequence of a drooling T. Rex going after a dinner of toddlers under glass. However, much of the feeding is rendered by implication in classic production code style, with screams and discrete camera pull-backs (cf. the first death-by-raptor in a crate and Nedry's fatal encounter with the venom-spewing dilophosaurus). The T. Rex, with a nod of the neck to THE GIANT BHEMOTH, performs the most explicit ingestion when she chomps into a sniveling lawyer and devours whole the attorney at jaw.

Another predictable rap on JURASSIC PARK is that for all its effects wonders—maybe because of them—it has no heart. Whatever the ultimate boxoffice take (the present betting is that ultimately it will settle in as the number-two grosser of all time, placing just short of E.T.), the film is all visceral spectacle, a magic show with nothing up its sleeve. That judgement seems unduly harsh—as always in Spielbergia, the magnetic pull of the nuclear family (Ellie's procreative urge rubbing against Grant's kid-o-phobia) anchors the effects. Still, anyone not employed by Universal would have to admit that in between the featured attractions, absent the rich characters of JAWS and the emotional kick of E.T., a very mediocre movie may be lurking about. Films that live by effects alone, die by them, goes this line of thinking, and it will be interesting to see how JURASSIC PARK weathers the years. After the next leap forward in technique, might not even this level of cinematic achievement look pallid and dated?

Probably not—like 2001, JURASSIC PARK seems likely to escape fossilization whatever the breakthroughs ahead. And the film does have a heart, though not in the mild romantic

sparks between Grant and Ellie or in Grant's eventual acceptance of proxy paternity over Timmy and Lex. As played by Richard Attenborough (himself the maestro of epic productions such as GANDHI and CHAPLIN), John Hammond comes off as neither madman scientist nor corporate badman, but as a true visionary, a Walt Disney kind of guy out for the big thrill as much as the big bucks.

One can't help thinking of Spielberg, the man whose greatest delight is to stand at the edge of the screen and watch moviegoers responding as one to his jump-cut bushwhacks. Like Hammond, he creates his own extravagant wonderlands, populates them with fantastic creatures, promises wild adventure and spellbinding spectacle, and more often than not delivers the goods. Spielberg, the auteur of JURASSIC PARK, could only look with sympathy upon Hammond, the “auteur” of JURASSIC PARK, and moviegoers could only be thrilled with their ticket to ride. □

Spielberg directs the visceral spectacle, a magic show with nothing up its sleeve, a career pinnacle.



JURASSIC PARK™

MAKING EFFECTS HISTORY

ILM's Dennis Muren, Mark A. Z. Dippe and Steve Williams on taking moviemaking to the next step.

By Ron Magid

Can a film foment a revolution? The techno-wizards of northern California's Industrial Light and Magic caused one effects apocalypse in 1977 when the company was formed by George Lucas to create effects for STAR WARS. What that film did for motion-control photography, JURASSIC PARK, Steven Spielberg's much anticipated film of Michael Crichton's cautionary tale of runaway science and genetically engineered dinosaurs, promises to do for computer-generated imagery. As the sign at ILM reading "Ye Olde Historic Motion Control Stage" indicates, the fast-approaching computer-effects age threatens to usurp even that hallmark of the ILM legacy, forever replacing the crude but wondrous techniques of the past with the sophistication and sterility of the video screen.

This breakthrough in computer technology threatens to leave a trail of fossils in its wake, including the beloved technique of stop-motion animation, and, to a lesser degree, full-scale animatronic puppetry. These suddenly outmoded techniques were once the cornerstones upon which JURASSIC PARK's effects were based. Originally, Spielberg hired Stan Winston to fabricate full-sized animatronic dinosaurs to use in principal photography, while stop-motion effects giant Phil Tippett was to handle the Go-Motion puppetry of miniature rubber dinosaurs articulated via traditional ball and socket armatures. Industrial Light and Magic was to add motion blur to Tippett's creatures' movements.

"I wasn't terribly thrilled about that idea," admitted ILM's Dennis Muren, who, along with Mark A.Z. Dippe, served as JURASSIC PARK's visual effects supervisor. "It seemed like a lot of work for



ILM effects supervisor Dennis Muren (left) and his CGI team (clockwise) Mark A.Z. Dippe, Eric Armstrong and Steve Williams, taming the computer beast.

something that always was going to fall short."

When forces within ILM lobbied to use computer-generated imagery instead of Tippett's puppet animation, ironically it was Muren, the man who supervised the breakthrough computer effects for James Cameron's THE ABYSS and TERMINATOR 2, who remained skeptical about using CG to create living, breathing dinosaurs. After all, a CG water tentacle or chrome man were both very different than the flesh and blood behemoths called for in JURASSIC PARK.

"We backed into it slowly because there was already a whole approach being taken with full-sized and Go-Motion dinosaurs," recalled Muren, ILM's towering white-haired senior mad scientist. "We needed to deliver our shots on time, and we didn't know how real we could make them using CG. I'd never seen the problems solved with the blends and the geometry where shoulders or elbows joined seamlessly. That stuff's incredibly

serious; you can't have that in a major movie, even though some CG people might say it's okay. We're not making CG here. The point is not to push the technology, the point is to make a movie. That's why I took this thing really slow, and I set the challenge: 'You've got to prove we can pull this off before I go to Steven.' From then on, I'd see tests and point out problems we still needed to solve. There were a lot at every stop."

Co-visual effects supervisor Mark A. Z. Dippe, one of ILM's next generation of up-and-comers, eagerly picked up Muren's gauntlet. "I was a total believer," the youthful Dippe said vehemently. "My attitude was, 'Let's take some risks and make some new types of images.' I felt with computer animation we'd have so much more freedom than with puppet animation. Stop- or Go-Motion puppets have very restricted movements because the puppets have to be supported by a physical rig. It's almost impossible to get your dinosaur to fall down and roll over

because you can't get the rig to do that very easily. In the computer world, we have total freedom of movement, and we can simulate all the attributes of a living dinosaur, like muscle and bone and skin and sweat and blood, which we can't do very well with a latex creature. I felt that by using CG, we could make our dinosaurs run and jump and fight and we could have herds of them! But there was still a lot of doubt on Dennis' part."

And so in December, 1991, Dippe enlisted the aid of his friend Steve Williams, and they set out to prove that CG was the best way to bring JURASSIC PARK's dinosaurs to the screen. Williams, who seems more at home on a Harley than behind a computer, was a graduate of Sheridan College, Disney's east coast training school. Though his background was primarily in cel animation, he intuitively grasped that the two-dimensional world of cartoons and the three-dimensional realm of the computer were oddly similar.

"If it doesn't work in 2-D, it won't work in 3-D," he grinned. "Dennis knew that Phil Tippett's shop was on this JURASSIC PARK project, but he also knew that if he let this little wild pack of dogs, namely me and Mark Dippe, loose on this CG problem, we'd solve it. I figured the easiest thing to do was to make a Tyrannosaurus Rex skeleton and animate it, so I had my brother-in-law send me down the complete schematics of a T-Rex, one of the 18-foot jobbies, from the Tyrell museum in the Badlands. I just scanned that in and began building bones in the computer, using the Alias modeling system, until I put together a Rex. Then lead computer graphics supervisor Stefen Fangmeier did a rendering of it on a rotating table using the RenderMan program so we could all look at it. It looked



ILM's ferocious CGI T-Rex. In the realm of the computer there is little distinction between the live-action background plate of the actors and the computer-generated dinosaurs. Getting another take is almost as easy as asking the dinosaur to back up and do it all again.

like a real T-Rex skeleton with shadows and the correct fluting on the skull and so on. Then I used Softimage and did a walk cycle on it and everyone freaked out."

After producers Kathleen Kennedy and Frank Marshall saw Williams' test, they agreed it was time to show the results to Spielberg, then offered to give ILM's guerrilla unit some additional funds to test for a herd of Gallimimus as well as build a convincing skin on top of the bones. By this time six people were working on it. Dippe and Williams took Stan Winston's one-fifth-scale Tyrannosaurus Rex maquette (which, ironically, was slated to become the Go-Motion animation puppet) to Cyberware, where the sculpture was sliced into cross-sections and scanned onto a computer disc. "I took the data back to ILM, where I remade it and fit it together so we could use it," Williams recalled. "It was inefficient for me to take the direct data and try to build a Rex in the computer; but I could use Winston's model as a template to make what was essentially a digital wireframe puppet of a T-Rex."

The digital T-Rex looked like a cross between a sculptor's armature and a topiary animal, using vertical and horizontal loops to create a rough three-dimensional puppet or "wireframe." "Stan Winston's T-Rex sculpture was beautifully done but static," observed effects supervisor Dippe. "It gave us what we called our 'Null Position.'"

Once the wireframe puppet had been made whole, it was time to complete this topiary creature's transformation into a living dinosaur by covering it with a tex-

ture map skin. For JURASSIC PARK, ILM developed a much simpler, more effective technique to skin a wireframe dinosaur: a system called 3-D Paint, which Williams and Fangmeier used to dress their T-Rex.

"Normally, we create a texture map by painting on a flat surface in the computer, and then the computer wraps that texture around our wireframe creature," Williams explained. "It's like working on a bearskin rug which the program then wraps around a wireframe bear. With 3-D Paint, we could look at our dinosaur from any point of view and then paint directly on its texture map skin after it was wrapped around the creature. That way we could do our final re-touching directly on our 3-D creature from the p. o. v. of the camera in any given shot."

But the T-Rex needed an additional layer of detailing not found in most CG creations: wrinkles. While some of the major folds

were built into the actual wireframe geometry, a myriad of smaller wrinkles, which had to ripple with each movement, were added by using a new technique called enveloping. "It's essentially the same bearskin rug," Williams said, "only covered with lines and wrinkles. Wherever a black line fell on the surface of the creature, the skin indented, and wherever a white line fell, it made a crest, which gave us the correct elephant-like skin for the Rex."

The animators also wanted the T-Rex's loose skin to jiggle the way an elephant's does when it moves. "We wanted to take the skin to a new level of believability," Williams said, "so we covered it with a bunch of invisible points and cross-sections, and we actually inserted little spheres under the skin that shook and shimmered whenever the dinosaur took a step. Each point, cross-section and sphere had a name and address so a sphere in quadrant five on the leg

muscle knows to talk to point #18 on the skin over the T-Rex's kneecap. That way, when the sphere on the leg shimmered at every step, the skin over the kneecap oscillated just a little as well."

After Spielberg witnessed Williams' and Fangmeier's skinned T-Rex test, the director was determined to have ILM do not only the herd shots, but all the dinosaur effects that were originally to have used Tippett's Go-Motion technique. Not only was ILM's CG work visually astounding, it was actually more cost effective. Tippett would remain on the project as animation director, and his facility, The Tippett Company, would interface with ILM through a system Muren and Tippett had conceived called "DID," or Digital Interface Device, which utilized an actual stop-motion armature linked to a computer. Using this mechanism, it was hoped Tippett and company could animate their wireframe T-Rex shots and then pass them back to ILM where skin and texture maps would be added before they composited the creature into the background plate.

For his efforts, Williams was awarded the position of senior animator on JURASSIC PARK, although ultimately six ILM animators and two Tippett animators shared equal credit. Visual effects supervisors Dennis Muren and Mark Dippe rapidly assembled a team of CG animators of varied backgrounds. Using Stan Winston's maquettes of his full scale creatures and other dinosaurs that would only appear in the film via computer animation, the ILM team soon had a miniature Brachiosaurus, Velociraptor and Gal-

ILM's grazing CGI Brachiosaurus, composited via computer with the live action.





ILM's CGI Velociraptors on the rampage. Noted Muren, "When you see shots that are no-holds-barred, creatures right there in your face—those're ours."

limimus, among others, scanned into their computers to work with in the digital realm. Muren had worked with Winston before on *TERMINATOR 2*, and found the experiences comparable: "Our work had to follow Stan's because his stuff was needed on set while our work began after production ended. Working in post-production, it was really important to focus on the shots we had to make, not on the whole deal. We delayed as much as possible on each sequence, hoping to get the final cut so that all our time and money could go into those shots that were definitely in the sequence."

ILM's CG dinosaurs not only had to be well rendered, they had to match Winston's full-scale creatures exactly, wrinkle for wrinkle, bump for bump. "Because of all the bumps and folds of skin, it had to be a dead match," Muren shook his head, "and that's hardly ever been done. Phil Tippett had input on the coloring and the final finish on all of them. We couldn't do our usual procedural ways for generating random surface detail because these things had to be very specific so they cut."

More importantly, they had to move believably, which meant that Muren, Dippe and their team had to become dinosaur psychologists. "Stan Winston and his crew deserve a tremendous amount of credit for designing the animals," Dippe said, "but we did a tremendous amount of work to bring them to life, and the way we did it was very sophisticated. Animation is where everything can fall apart; the creatures can easily look stiff and not move as if they have a center of gravity. To counter that, we had a local performance artist, Leonard Pitt, come here and give us classes every week in performance, dance, movement, even

mask work, just to get into the whole idea of how these creatures moved. We tried to find the tempo of their movements, see how they shifted their body weight, and played with things that were more serpentine like moving their tails. We went out and took footage of elephants and rhinos at Africa USA, and applied those movements to our CG dinosaurs. We also studied footage of Komodo dragons, which move very straight and stiff and whose bodies are tight, as well as ostriches, because some dinosaurs' movements were very birdlike. We became quasi-dinosaur experts, and then we took our theories to three paleontologists. They criticized us conceptually until we showed them our animation—then all three of them said, 'You know something? That looks so great, we may be wrong!'"

The biggest debate centered on how fast the Tyrannosaurus Rex would run in "the jeep chase" sequence, which, not surprisingly, was the first major T-Rex sequence animated by ILM for the film, and which incorporated some of the original test footage. "That was the most demanding T-Rex sequence," claimed Dippe, who supervised it. "The T-Rex runs after the jeep, crashes through a huge log blocking its path and does other things that a six-ton animal would have a

hard time doing, but we had to make it believable. The jeep was moving at 20 mph and the T-Rex had to catch up to it. What was fun about it was we'd totally created this creature and now we had to think like we were it. What's its motivation? I want to kill that motherfucker, I'm mean, I stink, my breath is really bad, I weigh six tons and I run 20 mph, but I run on two legs and I take three steps to stop and if I fall down, I'm going to break my neck!"

Steve Williams, the primary animator on this sequence, was now faced with the unenviable task of determining not only how a T-Rex ran, but how fast. "We had a zillion arguments about it," he laughed. "Some people argued that it was probably like a lion: it never ran unless it had to, and if it ran, it would do so for a short period of time and move very fast. Using that logic, I had to throw physics out the window and create a Rex that moved at 60 mph even though its hollow bones probably would have broken if he ran that fast. There was also the school of thought that the thing was so big and muscular it didn't matter whether it ran or not. Either way, there was no real reference for a seven-ton bipedal animal running around, so we had to try to invent a dinosaur and try to make it look believable."

"Phil Tippett and I debated about just how fast or slow the T-Rex should move," said Dippe. We wanted the dynamism and excitement and terror of the shot, which was related to speed, but we found ourselves fighting two things: if the T-Rex moved too fast, he started feeling light and

small, while if it moved really slow and the ground shook with every step, it felt heavy and gigantic but ponderous."

In order to give the behemoth the feeling of size and power, yet still make it capable of catching the speeding jeep, Dippe and Williams cheated the speed of its movements: "I tried something wacky," said Dippe. "I slowed him way down and made him move like he was so damn huge and fat, but we made his footsteps really far apart. Now he could take a 20-foot step, but that created other problems. In order to take such long steps, he had to crouch down, but we wanted him to look as big as possible in the frame. If he got too low, it started to cram him down, and if he got too high it didn't make sense for him to be taking such big steps! It took us weeks to figure this stuff out, not to mention the motion of his tail, but when we were done, all of a sudden, the shot worked. We showed our experiment to Spielberg and he said, 'That's it! That's it!'"

That settled, now the dinosaur had to be married to the background, a difficult proposition considering the plate had been shot from the back of a moving truck! "That was a very ambitious background plate," Dippe smiled. "We wanted to create a shot that felt like you're riding in the jeep and the camera's looking over your shoulder as you're thinking, 'Shit, look at that animal!' We couldn't use the Tondreau motion-control system in this case because it only works when the axes of movement are precisely known, meaning

IS IT LIVE, OR CGI?

"Stan Winston and his crew deserve a lot of credit for designing the animals," said ILM's Dippe, "but we did a tremendous amount of work to bring them to life."

ILM's gaggle of galloping Gallimimuses. This frame sequence shows how the CGI image of ILM's computer animation has the same blurred reality of the shot's live-action background plate, complete with ambitious freehand camera moves.



we'd have to have used dolly tracks and special tilt-pan heads so the computer could record the camera's positions. We didn't want to shoot a static plate motion control and then do some silly thing like add shake to it, but we wanted to get the feeling of a jeep really driving down the road.

"In the old days, we worried a lot about having steady cameras when we wanted to put an animated object into the frame; that object had to move with every jiggle in the background plate or it would look fake," Dippe added. "But because we were using CG effects and digital compositing, I felt we should shoot the jeep with some sort of in-frame reference to serve as guidelines for plotting the movement of each frame. In this case, we carefully placed little glowsticks on the ground at precise increments, like landing lights, at our location. Once the background plate was scanned in, we matched the movement of our two cameras by building a virtual set in the computer that duplicated the background plate, including the glowsticks. We then took one frame of the real picture and put it up on the screen and moved the computer camera around until the computer glowsticks lined up with the real ones. We did that for every eighth frame, then we went in and matched frames as needed until the computer camera moved in sync with the real camera."

It took almost three weeks to match the computer camera's movements to those of the real camera for the jeep chase sequence, but the shots rank among the most ambitious freehand camera moves ILM has ever tackled. The result is as seamless as a shot of a charging rhino chasing a team of photographers in a nature documentary. In the realm of the computer, the distinction between reality (the background plate) and effects (computer animation) becomes quite blurred. "In reality, you have a real camera, a real set and real actors," Dippe explained. "In the computer, we have a com-



ILM's CGI T-Rex in Spielberg's staggering jeep chase, the first major sequence animated for the film, incorporating some of the test footage that sold Spielberg on using CGI. The background plate was shot on the back of a moving truck.

puter camera, a virtual set and digital actors. Once the background plate is scanned into the computer, the computer camera becomes the same as the real camera, the virtual set becomes the same as the real set, and the real actors and our digital actors interact. We place our lights in the virtual set in the same place as the real lights are, shining in the same direction and the same color. It's funny, it's really a physical thing. We're directing a world of living creatures and physical objects that exist on our screen."

And getting another take is almost as simple as asking your dinosaur actor to back out of the shot and try it again. "That's the way I think about it," Dippe said, "but it actually takes overnight to compute. We set it all up on our virtual set, position our lights and then say, 'Okay, dinosaur, move a little faster now, crouch down a little lower and open your mouth four frames earlier!' I really just think that way, but then we have to go in with our mouse and select that stuff and run it, which usually takes at least an hour or two. On the other hand, if these were stop motion shots, we'd have to redo

the whole shot from the start, one frame at a time, and that could take days or weeks."

Once an image is in the digital realm, adding effects is akin to working with film on the atomic level, altering pixels, the essence of film, to create perfect images. In the computer, adding a dinosaur to a background plate means transmuting the pixels that once contained background information into dinosaur pixels; the process is seamless and undetectable. "In the old days when we did optical printing," Dippe recalled, "if we wanted to put 40 spaceships together to make a dogfight, we'd have to expose spaceship #1 on the negative, then add spaceship #2 to the same negative, and so on. That negative had to run through the optical printer 40 times, and if we screwed up anywhere in the process, we'd have to start from zero. That was part of the magic of the old ILM. On some of the STAR WARS films, they did composites of upwards of 40 elements, which in the optical printing world is almost mystical. Digitally, if we got the first 20 layers right but screwed up #21, we'd just redo the

21st layer and continue on. It's a totally transparent process."

The jeep chase sequence was a textbook of layered levels of CG animation. "After we added the primary dinosaur animation to the plate," Dippe said, "we layered in the debris and dirt kicked up by his feet, and some CG branches that were flying and debris explosions after he busts through the log. We also removed some flares caused by light shining through the trees. This was all done totally digitally before we went out to film again, and for any given situation, we could go back in and change one frame and the rest would stay intact, which is another advantage over optical printing. We shoot film, scan it into the computer, take out what shouldn't be there, add what's missing, then film it out."

One of the more demanding sequences was the Gallimimus chase, wherein Dr. Grant and two children flee a stampeding herd of ostrich-like dinosaurs, which eventually catch up to, run around and pass our heroes. As in the jeep chase, several plates contained ambitious freehand camera moves. "Photographically and directorially, shots like these create the feeling that you're actually there," Muren crowed. "For the Gallimimus chase, we had Steadicam shots running along with the actors as the Gallimimus were passing them, just the way you'd really shoot it if it were happening for real."

While Steve Price animated the shot of the T-Rex, the task of animating the herd fell to Eric Armstrong and Don Waller. Waller's background had been in the field of stop-motion animation, where he was considered one of its young

With up to 24 dinosaurs in any one shot, the stampede was one of the most ambitious computer animation scenes ever attempted. As a guide, the computer displayed the background plate in side, front and overhead perspectives.





The stampeding Gallimimuses were animated by Eric Armstrong and Don Waller, a stop-motion expert who had to master the computer in a hectic two months.

rising stars. For JURASSIC PARK, he had to master the computer in a hectic two-month period prior to beginning to animate on the film. "It was like learning a new language," he observed. "Overcoming the x-y-z plane while looking at a two-dimensional monitor and getting used to doing animation with a mouse instead of reaching in and grabbing a puppet were the biggest challenges I faced."

Waller was surprised to discover that the processes of stop-motion and computer animation were more alike than he thought. "The major differences between the two are that in CG, no individual animates the puppet, and, in my case, I was able to animate using extreme frames and let the computer add the in-betweens. I still had to tweak the action to get the dinosaurs to move properly, but the computer would in-between it for me about 50% of the way."

Waller's cel animation background helped him in terms of creating movement "cycles" for the Gallimimus. "It took Eric Armstrong and I about two weeks to figure out and animate our own versions of run cycles for the Gallimimus," Waller recalled. "That way we had two different runs plus we could further tweak them to make them look individual. We freeze-framed some ostrich footage on a videotape monitor, and then I put cels up on the monitor and traced the run cycle patterns of the ostriches a frame at a time to get an idea of how their legs moved. We also watched the stampede of the veldt animals in KING SOLOMON'S MINES because Spielberg kept referring to it, and we studied big herds of gazelles to see the way they turned. Phil Tippett also made comments about how these things should move."

With 24 Galis in any given shot, the stampede was fast be-

coming one of the more ambitious computer-animation sequences ever attempted. "The hardest thing to do in these shots was to make the Galis look like they were actually running around the actors," Waller said. Waller and Armstrong's task was aided by the computer itself, which allowed them to view the digital set from side, front and overhead perspectives, and by fellow animator Joe Pasquale. "Joe made little floating CG balloon heads that followed each of the actors as they were running along the path. He also made a computer grid that blocked the landscape into five-foot increments like a football field, which helped us decide where in space to place our Galis."

Positioning the Galis in the shot was accomplished using 'hood ornament forms,' which almost looked like giant wooden chess pieces, created by Eric Armstrong. "We first arranged our hood ornaments aesthetically from the angle that the background plate was actually shot, then we went to the other angles to make sure the dinosaurs weren't in danger of passing through one another into the fourth dimension!" Waller grinned. "We had to make sure the Galis were spaced so there appeared to be a lot of them coming over the hill, and when they did get close to each other, we had to make sure they didn't bunch up unnaturally and that they reacted as if they might collide with one another. Once we tweaked their paths, we went in and tweaked the animation of each Gali. Because the run cycles were already figured out, we were able to fully animate about three Galis a day in any given shot. At that rate, it took about a week and a half to get a finished shot. There were nine cuts in the sequence altogether."

One of the great attributes of CG praised by effects gurus is its

EFFECTS VERISIMILITUDE

"Photographically and directorially, these shots create the feeling that you're actually there," said Muren. "We used Steadicam shots the way you'd shoot it for real."

flexibility, a quality put to the test by a near-last minute decision from Steven Spielberg to add a sequence to his film not in Crichton's original novel. Though no self-respecting dinosaur movie would be complete without one giant behemoth battling another, sad to say that's exactly the case in the book, a deficiency which Spielberg decided to address well into production. "Steven came up with the idea of a fight between the Tyrannosaurus and a couple of Velociraptors about a month or so before he wanted to shoot it," recalled Dennis Muren, who supervised the sequence. "He gave us storyboards on it, but it was unclear as to what the fight was going to be, although we knew it had to end with one of the Raptors being tossed into the T-Rex skeleton in the Visitors Center."

"Once we got on that set, Phil Tippett and I got more specific with Steven on each of the shots to get the overall blocking of the action and performances right," he remembered. "We had to previsualize the entire sequence, set it up and shoot it. For the final two shots, we decided that the T-Rex would lower its head with the Raptor on its back, whip its head around, grab the Raptor's tail in its mouth, then swing it around and fling it across the room into the dinosaur skeleton. We walked through the action and he set the cameras so the fight would be the most dynamic. We probably didn't spend anymore than half an hour

figuring out the camera angles and movement. Phil had a big cutout of the T-Rex's head on a stick. We timed it, put two cameras on that shot, one locked off, the other moving, and ended up using them both. We rehearsed a dry run two or three times and then at the end of the actual shot, Michael Lantieri, who handled the floor effects, blew the T-Rex skeleton up. We got it in one take."

Of course the background plate for that scene just shows a Tyrannosaurus skeleton crashing to the ground. Animator Steve Price added the missing Velociraptor careening into the bones at precisely the right moment, as well as the enraged Tyrannosaurus. "That was just a matter of knowing we had to get from here to there," Muren said of the Raptor toss, "but that's nothing compared to trying to make these things look like living, moving creatures. In this final sequence, we have a CG Tyrannosaurus coming down within four feet of the camera lens, shaking the Raptor in his mouth, then tossing him 25 feet in the air. That was done all in one shot with the camera panning around! That's what I was going for on JURASSIC PARK: when you see shots that have no holds barred, where these creatures aren't hiding behind something, but are right there in your face—those're ours."

But Muren, who has labored in the field of computer-generated effects longer than just about any-

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Trailing ILM's CGI Brachiosaur. Computer graphics provided for a textured, wrinkled skin that shook and shimmered with each step like that of a real animal.



BARJO

Directed by Jerome Boivin. Myriad Pictures, 7/93, 85 mins. With: Ann Brochet, Hippolyte Girardot, Richard Bohringer.

Strange, funny, and a bit frustrating, this adaptation of the Phillip K. Dick novel, *Confessions of a Crap Artist* is possibly the most faithful adaptation of the author's work to date (although, compared against *BLADE RUNNER* and *TOTAL RECALL*, that isn't saying much). Shot from the viewpoint of the title character, known only as Barjo ("crap-head" in French), the film is fantasy more in nuance than in actuality—the inquisitive, intense Barjo (Hippolyte Girardot) comes to resemble a home-grown E.T. as he simultaneously waits for the end of the world (when, by his account, society will be taken over by "superior beings") and records in painstaking detail the dissolution of his twin sister FanFan's (Anne Brochet) marriage.

Unfortunately, director Jerome Boivin (who was also responsible for the intriguing, and more satisfying, *BAXTER*) fails to provide as much twist to sister FanFan's story—a serious deficiency in a film that's more her's than her brother's. Credit Boivin: he can present the off-beat without overselling the moment (such as a marvelously quirky shot that has a bird fluttering onto Barjo's head and a horse wandering into frame for no plausible reason), and touch emotions without making an audience feel like its buttons are being pushed. ● ● Dan Persons

CONEHEADS

Directed by Steven Barron. Paramount Pictures 7/93, 86 mins. With: Dan Aykroyd, Jane Curtin, Michelle Burke, Laraine Newman, Michael McKean, Chris Farley, David Spade, Adam Sandler and Garret Morris.

A delightful, warm, family comedy that appeals to this middle-aged viewer much more than the more recent *SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE* spinoff, the vacuous *WAYNE'S WORLD*. Maybe that's why it was a boxoffice dud.

The origin story of how the aliens came to Earth and, by hard work and perseverance, achieved the American dream is full of wonderful sight gags, and verbal ones for those who can get their ears around the strange monotones of Remulak speak. Late in the running time, we actually arrive on Remulak where there is some top notch stop motion animation by Phil Tippett. There are a large number of cameo appearances, many by SNL cast members past and present, some not easy to spot in their Cones. ● ● ● Judith P. Harris

MANIC COP 3

Directed by William Lustig and Joel Soisson. Academy Video, 8/93, 85 mins. With: Robert Davi, Caitlin Dulany and Robert Z'Dar.

This third entry in the series is virtually a pastiche of the Universal Mummy films of the 1940's. Dead and disfigured Robert Z'Dar is resurrected by a voodoo priest, and spends most of the film killing people who want to harm his comatose ex-girlfriend (although a fair number of innocent bystanders also bite the dust). After his girlfriend dies, Z'Dar wants her revived to be his zombie mate, but she stubbornly insists on remaining dead. A completely unmotivated car chase adds about ten minutes to the running time. Although professionally shot and edited, the film is dispensable (and, despite a generous helping of footage from *MC1* and *2*, is almost incomprehensible to audiences who missed these films). There just isn't enough of Z'Dar and his actions are perfunctory and predictable. There is one amusing exchange—psycho killer Jackie Earle Haley says "Oh great, I shot my lawyer." A fellow felon replies, "Get another one—they're free." ● ● David Wilt

CURSE IV: THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE

Directed by David Schmoeller. Columbia TriStar Pictures, 6/93, 87 mins. With: Timothy Van Patten, Laura Schaeffer and Ian Abercrombie.

Fourth installment in this "series" (consisting of entirely unrelated films) is a five-year-old Empire production shot in Italy, originally titled *CATA-*



Randy Quaid as the Monster in TNT's cable version of *FRANKENSTEIN*, made in England.

COMBS. As with a number of other, similar films from the Charles Band factory, locations and photography are top-notch, but the story leaves something to be desired. A possessed man is walled up in the catacombs of an Italian monastery—now, 400 years later, the demon busts out, just when an American schoolteacher (Laura Schaeffer) comes to visit. Also in residence is a young priest undergoing a spiritual crisis, and assorted neurotic monks. There are a lot of bad omens and sinister portents, but nothing much really happens until the last 15 minutes. Even then, the final confrontation between good and evil is rather anti-climactic, with very little in the way of action or special effects, just a lot of heated conversation. The cast is good, but their parts are so underwritten that no one makes much of an impression. ● ● David Wilt

FRANKENSTEIN

Directed by David Wickes. TNT Cable, 6/93, 150 mins. With: Patrick Bergin, Randy Quaid, John Mills, Lambert Wilson and Fiona Gillies

The claim to fame of this overwrought cable TV version of the Mary Shelley chestnut is that it's faithful to the novel, but as with Coppola's operatic *DRACULA*, this is just an excuse to graft onto a timeless tale more elements which aren't part of the original. And who cares if it's close to the book? Let's face it, the book is impossible to read, and no version has ever bettered the completely unfaithful 1931 version with the sublime Boris Karloff as the tormented creature. Randy Quaid is surprisingly good as the creature, and John Mills is touching as the blind man. Despite the fact the creature makes an appearance before the first commercial, the overall impression is tedium. ● ● Judith P. Harris

FROGTOWN II

Directed by Donald G. Jackson. Cinemax Cable TV, With: Robert Z'Dar, Denise Duff, Charles Napier, Don Stroud, Brion James and Lou Ferrigno.

This sequel of sorts to 1988's *HELL COMES TO FROGTOWN*, is a slow moving, repetitious, low budget, ludicrous story of Flying Texas Rangers battling mutant Frogs, pejoratively called "The Greeners." The Frogs are exactly like humans except the women have spots on their faces and bodies and the men sometimes have elaborate frog heads and sometimes just makeup. One is clearly a hand puppet.

The plot revolves around the attempt by the Tsar Frogmeister to mutate humans into frogs. The chosen guinea pig is Lou Ferrigno. As Lou learned when he

was *THE HULK*, it's not easy being green. Sent in to rescue him are Robert Z'Dar and Denise Duff. They immediately get captured and spend the rest of the movie breaking out. Brion James has a zesty role as a mad scientist with hair like Bozo the Clown. The flying sequences and particularly the helmets are considerably less believable than the old time movie serial *COMMANDO CODY*. The Frogs are armed with rifles and never hit anything. Z'Dar is armed with a pistol and brings down his enemy with each shot. The setting looks left over from some low budget Western. ○ Judith P. Harris

HARD TARGET

Directed by John Woo. Universal, 8/93, 86 mins. With: Jean-Claude Van Damme, Lance Henriksen, Wilford Brimley.

John Woo is the hottest of the current Hong Kong directors and he shows some of his skill in this lame rehash of the oft-filmed and oft-purloined *A MOST DANGEROUS GAME*. Van Damme's accent is explained away as Cajun as he plays a former Vietnam vet who is hired by a naive Detroit woman looking for a father who was killed by a secret society that hunts homeless vets for sport. Exciting sequels can't make up for the lame story and acting. ○ Dennis K. Fischer

SEA QUEST

Directed by Irvin Kershner. NBC-TV, 8/93, 86 mins. With: Roy Scheider, Stephanie Beacham, Don Franklin and Stacy Haiduk.

Perhaps a better title for this ill-conceived "sci-fi" underwater effort would have been *RAISE THE TITANIC*. Executive producer Steven Spielberg and his crew at Amblin deliver one of the most cliché ridden exercises in the genre since *FREEJACK*. Taking place in the near future, the year 2018, the world is governed by a group of multinational confederations all vying for the natural resources on the ocean floor. Roy Scheider's super sub polices and explores the world's oceans. During the Television Critics' Association press tour in Los Angeles at which the premiere was screened in July, critics called the show everything from *DAS BOMB* to *VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE RATINGS*.

But *SEA QUEST* isn't without merit. Both composer John Debney and CGI wiz James Lima acquit themselves admirably. But it's clear that new executive producer David Burke, who took over after the pilot, has his job cut out for him. If anyone is capable of keeping the show afloat it's this former *WISEGUY* and *CRIME STORY* producer who's one of the best scribes on the small screen. ○ Mark A. Altman

The Garthok, animator Phil Tippett's homage to Ray Harryhausen effects, seen in *CONEHEADS*.



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ENGLUND'S NIGHTMARES

continued from page 51

Freddy done and what is he to the people who made the movies? It deals with the question of creating a horror icon and then releasing him into the cinematic world where he's absorbed into the real world's pop culture. Is the world a better place after his arrival? How does he affect our real lives as opposed to our screen personae? All exciting, different and unique stuff. I can't wait to start working on it. And 7 is Wes' lucky number."

But how does all this fit in with the ending of JASON GOES TO HELL: THE FINAL FRIDAY, where Freddy's gloved hand grabs Jason's hockey mask climax? "Oh, NIGHTMARE 8 will be the Freddy versus Jason idea," Englund remarked casually. "What's old is new again. My excitement over Wes Craven's NEW NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET is that the powers that be have finally realized it was a classic series which offered great opportunities to comment on contemporary culture. We were so eager to wrap up the story in FREDDY'S DEAD, we didn't do it properly. Now we probably have our best chance to do so."

And after reprising his most famous role, Englund may step into the shoes of two other classic monsters. "There's talk of me starring in the remake of Fritz Lang's M to be shot in Budapest. Strangely enough, it's the part I feel Freddy most owes a debt to. Then there's THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME which, aside from his deformity, harks back to the sympathetic parts I used to play pre-Freddy. I've been wondering when the major studios would apply all the new special effects technology to the classic horror monsters. Perhaps this will start the trend." □

TIM BURTON

continued from page 34

whose good intentions are misperceived by those around him. "I grew up with those pictures," remembered Burton, "so I feel close to them. In PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE [much of which takes a place in a graveyard] there are references to Burbank, and I lived near a cemetery when I was growing up, so I thought they were talking about the [Burbank] cemetery."

Quoting a line from the ED WOOD script, Burton laughed and said, "It's a movie that will entertain millions." □

FUTURISTIC CARS

continued from page 27

off that this is how he regards it,

and only small consolation in the fact that however well he does, not even he could afford it.

"The back of the car is completely modular," recounted a beaming Silver to his visitors. "You go to the dealership and they literally snap out your entire back, which is your engine. And you know what? This car has traveled more than we have." □

SCI-FI COSTUMES

continued from page 31

police uniform four or five times."

After EXCALIBUR premiered, a number of fashion designers—particularly some in Japan—began to incorporate medieval armor motifs in their designs. Alas, Ringwood said it is impossible to tell whether his fashions in DEMOLITION MAN will make themselves felt in today's fashion world, or even in Japan.

"I don't think it's like the old days when Adrian invents shoulders, and the next year everyone is wearing shoulders. The fashion world is too diverse and there's no mainstream line. Everyone's doing their own thing." □

ACTION STARS

continued from page 25

before," said the star. "It's a story of conflict, a story about Good and Evil. Not only are me and Wesley good and evil, but the town itself, the city, the world: on top, everything looks good; underneath, everything's rotten. It starts out as just me and Wesley trying to fight each other, but I find out there's a lot more going on here: society is not what it seems to be; this future is not so pure; and the bad guys are not so bad. So there's a statement made about how we all have to co-exist, and there's no one way—there's many ways that have to mesh together. Like I say at the end of the film, you people down here have to get a little clean, and you clean people have to get a little dirty, and somewhere in the middle we'll find the truth!"

Snipes, on the other hand, sees the science fiction as pure escapism. "I don't think this needs to have a message," he stated. "Sometimes, things are pure entertainment, and I think this is maybe one of those films. If people chose to find a message in it hey, different strokes for different folks! I just want to have a good time—bring somebody and say, 'Hey, if you want to have a good time, come and see this film!'" □

DEMO WRITER

continued from page 18

Oh, and Lenkov received \$60,000, the prospect of a \$160,000 bonus, and some rewrite work,

leading a letter writer in a subsequent issue of *Premiere* to observe that, in typical Hollywood fashion, the fellow who did the most work made the least money.

Is Lenkov pissed? You bet! But having moved on to better things—Lenkov has also penned a sequel to Sam Raimi's DARK-MAN—this Montrealer can also afford to be reflective.

"I was naive," he said in what by now has become one of the oldest songs in this town. "I didn't understand how the business works. I come from a trusting background. I trust people—I still do. The mistake I made was getting involved with the wrong people. Fortunately, I then got involved with the right people—Warner Bros and Joel Silver. And that's it. Chalk it up to a learning experience." □

MUTANT ACTION

continued from page 49

Naschy/Jacinto Molina, writer, director and star of numerous horrors including the Waldemar Daninsky werewolf series, THE HUNCHBACK OF THE MORGUE and DRACULA'S VIRGIN LOVERS. Recalled Iglecia, "Naschy agreed to play a cameo but had to have urgent open heart surgery when we came to shoot the scene. While I see ACCION MUTANTE as exploring new territory in Spanish horror, I'd be proud if critics said I was following in Naschy and Franco's footsteps." □

JURASSIC CGI

continued from page 58

one, knows all too well how quickly such cutting-edge imagery becomes passe: "I'm not sure how this stuff is going to age, because we're starting out with something that's so strong. Maybe we'll look back in ten years and notice we left things out that we didn't know needed to be there until we develop the next version of this technology. One thing's for sure: we haven't seen the end of this. When I set up T-2, I said, 'I haven't found the wall yet' and I still haven't. There may not be one."

Like the scientists in Jurassic Park, the brains at ILM have taken their science to a level even they can't quite conceive of. This next evolutionary plane promises incredible new vistas which will all reside in the realm of the computer. But in planting this seed, ILM may well sow the roots of its own obsolescence. Eventually the wizardry of JURASSIC PARK will be available to everyone with a personal computer. Of course, developing the talent to use it imaginatively is another matter. □

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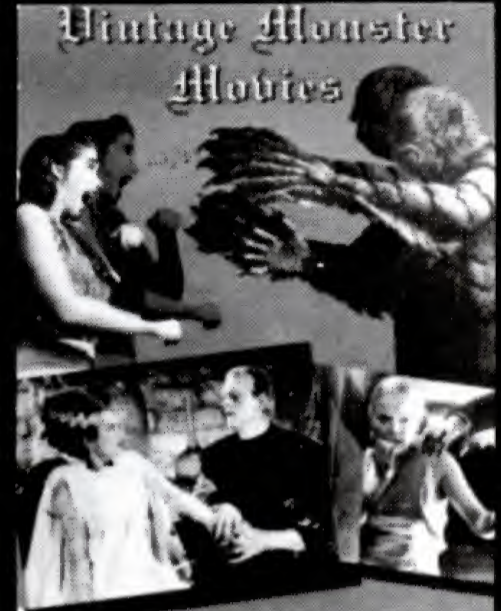
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LETTERS

GUTLESS "TREK"

Ask any composer and they'll tell you that music should convey the emotional content of the scene. Both DEEP SPACE NINE and NEXT GENERATION have themeless, almost subliminal scores that convey one and only one emotion: apathy. Thus, even the best stories come off as frivolous. If you don't believe it, listen to the zestless music of any episode from this past season and compare it with the show's (and Ron Jones') best score, "Booby Trap." Rick Berman is wasting his money on the show's composers. He could fire them all and use the same score every week and no one would notice, since they all sound alike anyway. Music is as vital to drama as costuming, yet I doubt he would allow the actors to wear their street clothes on camera.

Firing Jones isn't the show's only mistake. They should have kept the Young Ro on the series, should have killed Riker and kept Lieutenant Riker, should have stabilized Moriarty and made him one of the crew! Yes, this season they were more daring than usual. But they didn't go far enough. Instead of really cutting loose and going for all-out fun, they give us tired old SF clichés like clones ("Rightful Heir," "A Man Alone") and alien body snatchers ("The Passenger," "Dramatis Personae").

Dan Clemens
Newton, NC 28658

TREK POINT, COUNTERPOINT

The arrival of the latest 100-page STAR TREK issue has forced me to the brink of a very, very difficult decision: STOP BUYING YOUR MAGAZINE. I have virtually every issue of *Cinefantastique* going all the way back to issue #1; every issue for the past 15 years and am a long-time subscriber. However, your ridiculous attention to "Star Trek: TNG" and its TV brethren, alienates me to no end.

As you properly argue, *Cinefantastique* should "spotlight the best in (fantasy) films, whether they air on television or not," but your recent history of detailing the minutiae of TV production verges on the pathological. A look at the back cover of Vol.

24:3/4 gives a quick visual symbol of your magazine's obsession.

I really hope you will listen to us "old time" readers and save the magazine we grew up with. I would really like to continue my collection (and subscription).

Anthony DiSalvo
Los Angeles, CA 90019

[No Trek this issue, not even in the back cover ad. It's only natural we'd advertise our Trek back issues with a Trek cover story. Take a look at this issue's back cover for a sample of our diversity. And as long as Trek maintains its high standards of production and quality you'll continue to find it, from time to time, in our pages and our on our covers. FSC]

I am 21 and was very insulted that Mr. Frank Calloway of Loveland, Colorado [24:3/4:126] insinuated STAR TREK was not adult, calling it bland, superficial science fiction! I have learned a lot from this show. They deal with such *adult* issues as how to cope with the loss of parents, how we can overcome racism and how there is no greater responsibility than to continue the message that communication and reason is the way to solve problems. These are indeed *Very Adult* issues! If we had more TV shows that taught qualities like this, our world would be a much kinder, gentler place!

LaVette Rowland
Cincinnati, OH 45205

ONLY IF HE HAS A GOOD LAWYER

With the film adaption of Stephen King's novel NEEDFUL THINGS about to be released in theatres it reminded me that King's novel is very similar to a Richard Matheson short story called "The Distributor" (*Collected Stories*, Dreampress, Los Angeles, 1989; original publication, *Playboy*, March, 1958.) Both stories feature a man moving to a town and, by misleading the townfolk with false information, causes the members of the community to violently turn upon each other. Perhaps King thought of the idea independently. What seems more plausible is that King, who has said that he is an

admirer of Matheson, read the story and then forgot it, while his subconscious mind did not. Many years later the idea comes back into his mind without any memory of its source and he writes NEEDFUL THINGS. Whatever occurred, I wonder if Matheson is going to receive a percentage of the film's profits?

Joseph Moschetti
Castro Valley, CA 94546

OVERBOARD ON JURASSIC PARK

Your review of JURASSIC PARK [24:3/4] is unbelievable. I cannot believe you saw the same film I did. This is a terrible movie. Granted the special effects are great, but they don't make a movie. This is possibly the worst lit movie I have ever seen, it looks like they used mirrors to reflect floodlights on the actors. The acting is atrocious. Laura Dern should be painfully executed for her dreadful performance. There are more holes in

the script than in most soap operas. Mr. Biodrowski astonishingly calls this Spielberg's best film. There is nothing here as terrifying as the opening sequence of JAWS or as awe-inspiring as the aliens in CLOSE ENCOUNTERS, or as thrilling as the truck chase in RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK. To say JURASSIC PARK is better than those films is absurd! I don't want to pay seven bucks for some cool computer graphics. Get a clue, *Cinefantastique*!

Jonathan Eisen
Greenwich, CT 06831

CORRECTION

Thanks to readers Sheila Goetz and Karen Hess for pointing out that our photos from JURASSIC PARK (24:2:10, 17, 27) were of Arianna Richards as Alexis "Lex" Murphy, the granddaughter of park creator John Hammond and not of Laura Dern. Please excuse our brain cramp.

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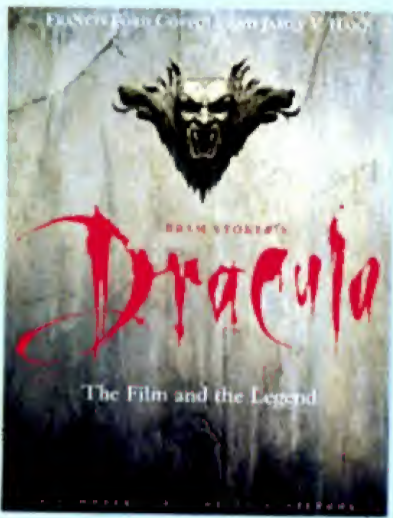
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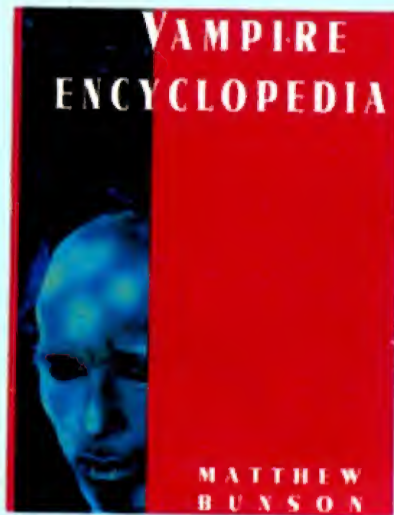
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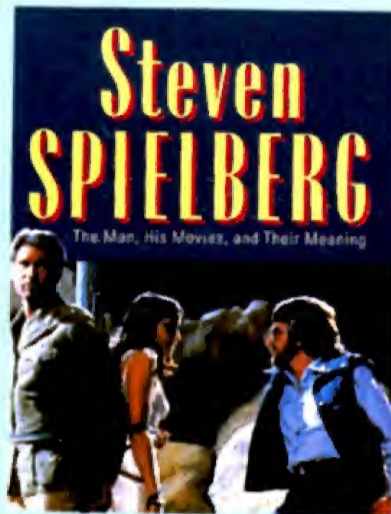
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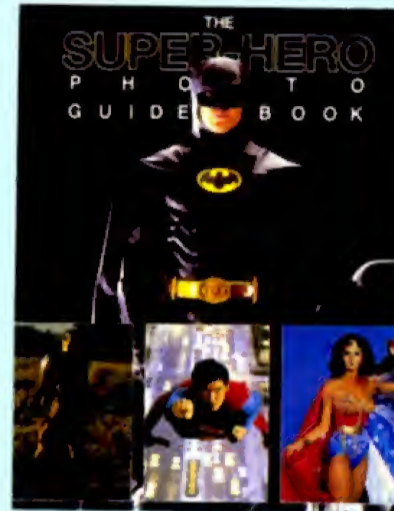
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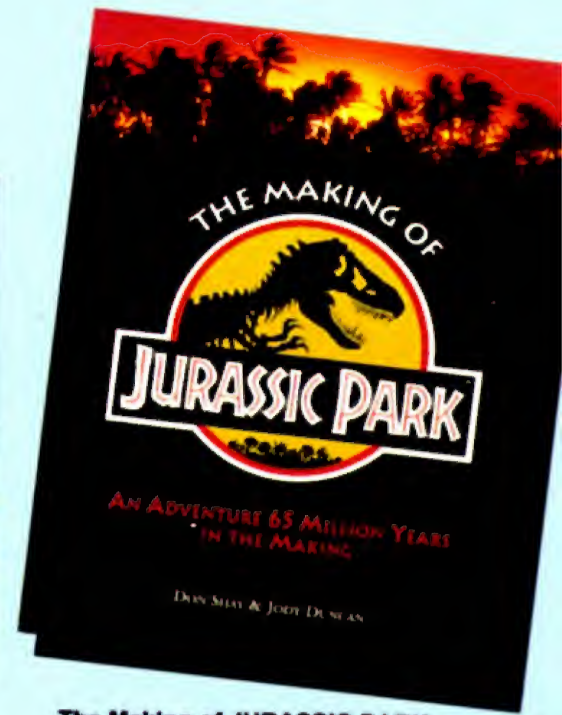
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Volume 22 Number 5

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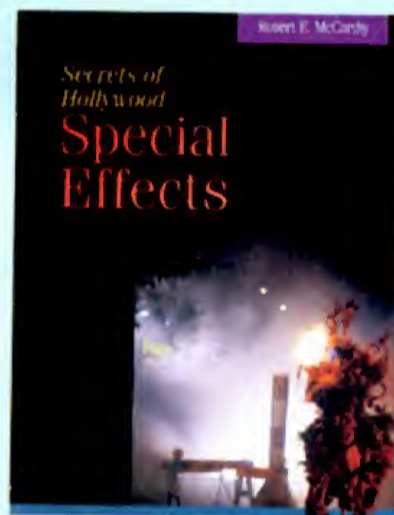
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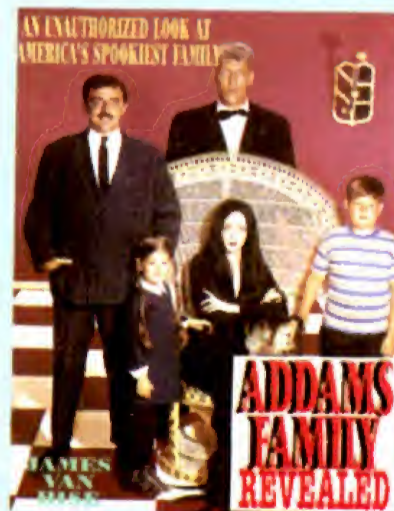
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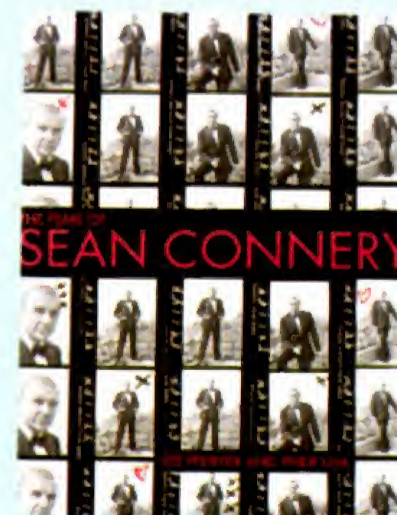
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Prepare yourself for a terrifying journey through the black, murky depths of a nightmare. Giger's *Alien* explores the combination of talent and singular imagination which resulted in an Academy Award-winning film. Cloth, 74 pp. 12 x 12. For a limited time, an ALIEN poster will be sent **FREE** with each book order. **\$39.99**



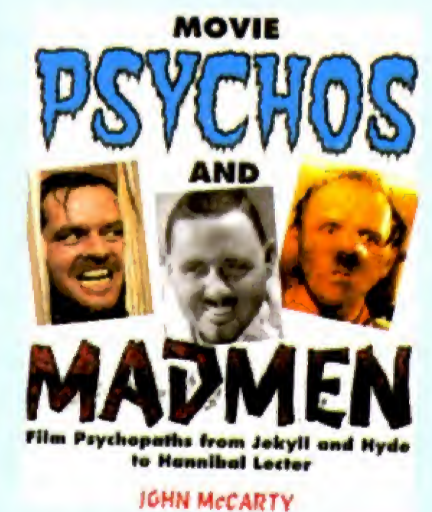
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Margaret Atwood's chilling, cautionary novel *The Handmaid's Tale* came to life on the screen with Natasha Richardson, Robert Duvall and Faye Dunaway, directed by Volker Schlöndorff. This issue features interviews with Atwood, Schlöndorff, Richardson and crew. Also THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER and ROBOCOP 2. **\$8.00**



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